$2.50

$2.95 in Canada

The Contentious Journal

NMP

ROCKET'S BLAST COMICOLLECTOR

Parody Issue 153

THE SPECTRE VS. THE HULK: Michael Fleisher Returns!

rap! rap!
one way
...SEEKING DIRECTIONS AS TO WHICH WAY ALOTA HATH GONE, PRINCE VIOLENT STOPPETH A MAN WHOM, BY HIS POINTY-SHAPED HELMET, VIOL TAKETH TO BE A SOLDIER!

WE'RE LOST OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN! BUT WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHERE THAT REVOLUTION WILL BE! CAREFUL, YOU DUMKOPF! YOU'RE GETTING MY BOOTS WET!
HAH! A LIFE PRESERVER AHEAD!

HAHAHA! YOU POOR FOOL! IT IS USELESS TO TRY AND STRUGGLE TO BREAK THROUGH MY POWERFUL MYSTIC PLATINIUM LASSOO! NOTHING CAN BREAK THROUGH MY LASSOO UNLESS I SO WILL IT!
I GOT NEWS FOR YOU, KID!
KILROY WASN'T HERE YET!

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IMAGINE VIOL'S SURPRISE WHEN HE DISCOVERETH THE VARLET HATH NO HELMET ON AT ALL! THE MAN POINTETH OUT WHERE THE MAIDEN HATH PASSED...

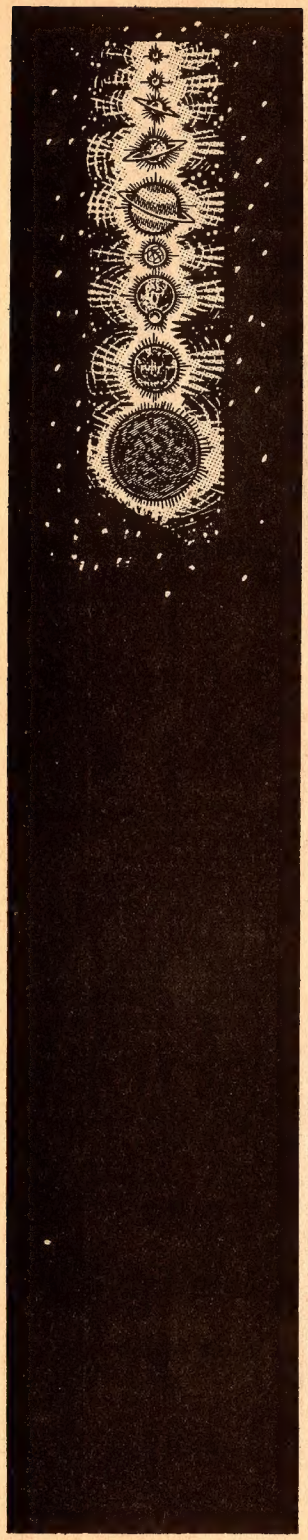
WOMAN WONDER! I STOLE YOUR POWERFUL MYSTIC PLATINIUM LASSOO A LONG TIME AGO AND HOCKED IT FOR PLENTY CASH TO BUY THIS CAVE SET-UP! THIS LASSOO IS A SICKLY REALISTIC PLASTIC LASSOO I SUBSTITUTED!

..WELL, PERHAPS IF WE LEAPED BODILY OFF THIS CLIFF AND DIDN'T TOUCH ANY SOLID MATTER...
LOOKOUT! YOU ARE KNOCKING OVER SOME AIRMEN!
6★Ta!!
#7★6!

The Contentious Journal

NO.89
$2.50
16 pages!

The editor of the RBCC (wearing futuristic contact lenses) appears in this page from an unpublished Star Wars story by Kerry Gammill. Then again, maybe it looks like Kerry himself, but then again it also sorta' looks like Richard Pini, but then again...



The Contentious Journal

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COVER — THE SPECTRE and THE HULK are (c) 1982 by the D.C. and Marvel Comics Group, or at least what's left of THE HULK is (c) by Marvel.

The front cover is by John Turek. The inside front cover (otherwise known as page 2) is (c) Lucasfilm and Marvel Comics as it's from a STAR WARS comic that Kerry Gammill drew about 4 years ago and which Marvel is honest-to-god going to publish one of these days--in England at least. That one page was inked by Eddie Eddings as a sample of his work with Kerry.

If this hasn't wasted enough space to help fill out this page and make it look enough like a pseudo-TCJ table of contents then I may just ramble on for awhile longer about things like the fun times I have writing for STARDOG, like getting to dine with the stars at Schwabs, riding in the Man From UNCLE car and any number of things to make for tiny, reduced type to use as filler, and so...

Inside back cover: Ron Wilber Back cover: Michael R. Adams

The Contentious Journal
NEWS CATCH

Jim Shooter Meets Bizarre End

BY ROBERT STRAUSS

Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter was found dead in his Manhattan apartment on December 18, the victim of what New York homicide detective Frank Yorty, a 35 year veteran of the death investigation squad, called "The most revoltin' development I have ever come across." All of the blood was drained from Shooter's veins, apparantly while he slept, by an unknown intruder who replaced the blood with quarts of Red #2 printers dye, the kind used in comic books. The dye caused an allergic reaction inside Shooter's body, which resulted in his skin wattling up into hard, orange scales. The New York city coroner has determined the cause of death to be "something on the order of terminal psoriasis."

News of the grisly murder sent shockwaves throughout the comic-book producing community

"Just awful," said Roy Thomas, when informed of Shooter's death at his home in California. "I keep thinking that if I'd have been in New York I might have been able to somehow prevent this tragedy. Unfortunately, I was here in California at the time, as any of my friends, neighbors and business associates can tell you."

"A senseless tragedy," echoed Thomas's fellow Californian, Steve Gerber. "I've been broken up about it ever since Roy sent the crosstown telegram telling me just moments after he got the word, which Western Union has a record of and was less than an hour after the time the coroner set as the moment of death."

Writer Marv Wolfman cut short his European vacation when reached with the news. "I was so shocked I hopped the first plane out of Frankfort, and I have the cancelled airline tickets to prove it!" Wolfman said. "I still can't believe it. I was in Germany with Marv," Len Wein said in a short, emotional statement.

Marvel publisher Stan Lee, Shooter's former boss, issued an official statement the day after the body was found. It read, in part, "...we've no doubt that a true believer like Jim is facing front right now in that great bullpen in the sky, along with Bucky, Gewn Stacy and Millie the Model."

Marvel President James Galton issued a communique soon after Lee's that repudiated the publisher's remarks and went on to state that "...Stan's been very upset by Jim's death and won't be available for comment for at least two months--longer if the treatments don't take right away."

At press time, the New York police have not named any suspects in the killing. They have, however, requested that any person who's worked on a comic book in the last five years keep them informed of their whereabouts or a warrant will be issued for their arrest. John Byrne has been named interim editor at Marvel. "Like I told the hundreds of fans I was speaking to at the Miamicon when news of this horrible tragedy reached us, apparently just minutes after it had occurred, 'This is not a time for sorrow, but a time to bring a new direction and greatness to the House of ideas.' I know Jim would've wanted it that way," Byrne told an interviewer as he supervised the redecorating of Shooter's former office.●

(c) 1980 Marvel Comics Group

An artist's interpretation by Al Williamson of what might have happened to Jim Shooter.

NEWSCATCH

Ted Turner Starts Comic Book Company

Multimillionaire Atlanta businessman Ted Turner has announced that he plans to form a new comic book publishing company, Tenacious Comics.

"Comic books are the medium of the future," Turner said at a press conference called to announce the new venture. "Hell, with the way the schools are going downhill and people spending all of their free time watching television, in ten years no one's going to be able to read anything that isn't accompanied by a whole bunch of pictures and understand what it's about," Turner said.

Four books are already scheduled for release by the new company. The first, CAPTAIN TENACIOUS, about a wealthy, independantly-minded yachtsman who never loses a sailing race will be written by Gary Friedrich and drawn Werner Roth. Arnold Drake will write and Wayne Boring will pencil THE BRAVE ONE, the continuing saga of a wealthy, independantly-minded sports entrepreneur who buys a losing but beloved professional baseball team and transfers it to another city where it becomes a losing but ignored professional baseball team. Steve Skeates and Al Hartly are the creative team on SATELLITE SUPERMAN which relates the adventures of a wealthy, independantly minded owner of a local TV station who manages to convince people all around the country that it's worth it for them to pay twenty dollars a month to have him beam old movies and "Beverly Hillbillies" reruns off of a satellite into their homes.

Tenacious Comics' most ambitious project is an entirely new concept in the field called "Four-color News Comics".

"We've set up news bureaus in New York, Washington, London and Manila, all outfitted with the latest electronic news-gathering eqipment and staffed by professional reporters and fast comic book artists," explained editor-in-chief Don McGregor."

The idea is to gather the latest news as it happens, get it drawn up as quickly as possible, rush it by Concorde to the printing plant at Sparta, Illinois, and hopefully have it on the newsstands before the six o'clock news every day, seven days a week. "I really think it'll be relevant," McGregor added.

Turner admits that he expects to lose twenty to thirty million dollars a year on this last project alone, but feels that it's a small price to pay to get in at the beginning of what he foresees as a "four-color revolution" coming in the next decade.

"And if it doesn't work, I can always sell my interest in the damn thing to Marvel," Turner concluded optimistically."●

Briefly Noted: DC

Under growing pressure from D.C. to create "another Conan," Roy Thomas has come up with ANTHRAX THE BARBARIAN. Although in the typical Barbarian mold, what makes him different is that he doesn't need skilled swordplay to win a battle. Living under a wizard's curse, if he loses a battle he just bleeds on his opponent and the vile diseases living in his bloodstream kill his enemy on contact. In the first issue he meets a female counterpart of himself who during "that time of the month" inadvertantly wipes out entire cities.

National Periodical Pubs has sold the rights to one of their comic book titles to Hollywood for a major motion picture. An animated film, it'll be titled AMERICAN PLOP!●

(c) 1980 DC Comics Inc.

Warren Strikes Again!

SUDDENLY SHE STOOD ABOVE, GRINNING A MAD, TOOTH-GAPING GRIN, AS SHE PULLED OPEN THE QUILTED ROBE AND LET IT SLIDE TO THE FLOOR...!
AFTER ALL...

HER WHITE, SKELETAL HANDS REACHED OUT TO EMBRACE HIM...AS UNABASHED LUST ROSE MOCKINGLY IN HER WATERY YELLOW EYES...!
...AN OLD WOMAN GETS LONELY!
end
(c) 1980 Warren Publishing Co.

The startling denouement panels from "Roomers," the Budd Lewis authored story from CREEPY #122. When reached for comment, Lewis explained, "Hey, hasn't the magazine's motto always been 'comics to give you the creeps,'?"

Never known as a bastion of good taste, Warren Pubs will be releasing a new book titled ROOMERS. Based on the story in CREEPY #122 (which was voted by readers as the "Most Nauseating story of 1980"), it will continue the adventures of Rubal Horde and his continual humiliation at the hands of the aged and decrepit Miss Taisey who has blackmailed him into being her sexual partner to prevent her from revealing that he committed a murder. Issue one will feature a book length thriller, "Miss Taisey Reads The Kama Sutra."●

NEWSCATCH

Marvel Merry-Go-Round

A new title being added to Marvel's regular comic book line-up will be MOST OFF THE WALL ADVENTURE IN A MARVEL MAG THIS MONTH. It will soon be joined by a companion title- A SHATTERING CONCLUSION YOU WILL NEVER FORGET.

With the success of STAR TREK II--THE WRATH OF KAHN, Marvel is renewing their option on the comic and will be publishing sporadic special issues. Since Marvel never figured out that their previous attempt suffered from dull covers and dull artwork, they're pulling out all the stops to make the book as wild as possible. One such issue will be "Star Trek Meets The Three Stooges," in which a transporter failure transforms Kirk, Spock and McCoy into the zany trio who run riot on the Enterprise. After being recaptured and sent back through the transporter, they re-emerge as the Marx Brothers, and then the terror begins!

In a move designed to deal with declining sales, Marvel and D.C. have both announced across the board price decreases. It was decided that this was a much more logical way to stimulate sales than to charge higher prices for the same old thing.

Both companies have been faced with the dilemma of rising costs forcing a higher cover price, but whenever the cover price on their books was raised they suffered a corresponding drop-off in sales so that a circulation of 100,000 per issue, which was once considered bottom line and meant a title was destined for the garbage heap, is now considered an okay circulation. What led to this change was the rise of non-returnable direct distribution to large wholesalers who have captured such a large portion of the market that both Marvel and D.C., who once only tolerated Fandom as a group of diehard extremists, now actively courts their favor.

Artists are now given royalties on books that sell over 100,000 direct market which is causing the better artists to migrate to the more lucrative titles while the less popular artists find themselves illustrating titles which only sell 30,000 copies in the direct market and thus are forever precluded from garnering bonuses.

On the subject of the new lower prices a spokesperson for Marvel said, "We think our books are worth it."

Languishing in the files when Roy Thomas left Marvel was an unpublished sequel title to their controversial RED SONJA. The book features the son of Red Sonya (someone finally nailed her) and will be titled RED JONYA (see inset).

HULK ANNUAL #12: "The Hulk vs. Saturday Night Live!" -- While viewing a rerun of the syndicated episode hosted by Margot Kidder, Bruce Banner witnesses the John Belushi Hulk bathroom sketch and undergoes a paroxysm of anguish. Since this brings on his Hulk transformation, the Hulk begins stalking the Not Ready For Prime Time Players. The twist is that he doesn't know they've all been replaced by new people.

As a tie-in with CONAN, Marvel is releasing a special mini-book--BARBARIAN JOKES FOR THE JOHN. The artist is anonymous.

NEWS CATCH

An up-coming issue of BIZARRE ADVENTURES will continue their policy of adapting famous writers by doing an all HARLAN ELLISON issue. This issue will spotlight some of Harlan's rare and offbeat science fiction. The stories to be adapted include:

"Forbidden Cargo" (SCIENCE FICTION ADVS. Aug. 1957)
"Psycho At Mid-Point" (SUPER-SCIENCE FICTION, December 1956)
"Revolt Of The Shadows" (FANTASTIC, Dec. '57)
"Phoenix Land" (WORLDS OF IF -- March 1969)
"March Of The Yellow Death" (FANTASTIC, Oct. '57)
"Invasion" (FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, Feb. '57)

As part of their promotion, Marvel will capitalize on the fact that none of these stories have ever been reprinted before in any form until now. Those who have read them predict that Harlan's reputation will achieve a new dimension as a result of these classics being brought into print again.

Cadence (which owns Marvel Comics) has announced a new line of male pornographic magazines. Seizing the opportunity to use an already copyrighted title owned by Marvel Comics, they'll be calling the engorged magazine GIANT SIZE MAN-THING.

CAPTAIN AMERICA MEETS UNCLE SAM: Another Marvel/DC crossover. Just for yuks it's being drawn by Will Eisner. To maintain the tradition, Eisner is being paid circa 1939 rates.

Marvel has announced that beginning with the June issues they will once more dub their comics "Marvel Pop-Art Productions." Used briefly in the Sixties on their books by Stan Lee, it was quickly dropped under a mountain of criticism that it was trendy and silly. "We think the climate now is very different," said a spokesman for the company. D.C. quickly countered by saying, "Oh yeah? Well we're gonna' bring back the Go-Go Checks!" ●

RAW Purchased By Marvel

In a surprise joint communique, John Byrne (interim editor replacing the slain Jim Shooter) and Art Spiegleman have announced the purchase of RAW magazine by Marvel Comics.

Spiegleman commented: "This move, I feel, will enable me to concentrate on my own work, such as MAUS and give Francoise room to pursue other interests."

New RAW editor Byrne seemed confident of the magazine's future. "Well, this magazine is first and foremost a welcome addition to the mighty Marvel line-up, especially since we have a lot of talented artists who've been itching to do experimental stuff. We've already got some amazing strips by Sal Buscema and Don Perlin."

Byrne also expressed his appreciation of Spiegleman's work. "Back when I first started in comics, I had a complete collection of Topps' "Wacky Packs" bubblegum cards--and now, years later, I've finally been previleged to meet the man who created them."

As for Spiegleman's current work, Byrne had nothing but praise. "Mice--mice are a viable concept. Frankly, a year or two ago, I had this idea for a title: WHAT IF WORLD WAR II HAD BEEN FOUGHT BY FUNNY ANIMALS? So when I heard about Art's material, I was amazed at the similarity and, with a little persuasion, convinced Art that the move would be a healthy one for both his and his wife's financial well-being."

The new RAW, possibly re-titled, is due out sometime this coming summer. ●

FRAZETTA Inks Again!

Frank Frazetta has announced his return to comics with the first new comic book work from him to be published since 1964. Conceived by Dave ("Rocketeer") Stevens, who will also edit and write the book, the comic will be called BETTY PAGE COMICS. Based on a popular model of the Fifties (and who appears as a supporting character in Stevens' "Rocketeer" strip for Pacific Comics), illustrations of Betty have long been popular among "Good Girl Art" fans. A back-up feature in the book will be a spread of old Betty Page pin-up photos, including some rare nudes. The cover will feature Betty being menaced by Frank Frazetta's famous natives from the cover of THUN'DA #1. ●

50¢ 37 NOV
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
DAZZLER
THIS IS IT!
SHE'S BACK!!
AW, NO--! NOT YOU!! IT CAN'T BE YOU!
WATCH FOR THE JOUST ON PAGE 11!
LAST STAND IN DISCOLAND!
THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN'T FIGHT...
...AND IT GETS WORSE!
THE MOST OFF-THE-WALL ADVENTURE IN A MARVEL MAG THIS MONTH!
THIS DRAMATIC TALE IS DESTINED TO BE ANOTHER MIGHTY MARVEL MILE-STONE
A SHATTERING CONCLUSION YOU WILL NEVER FORGET!
GUEST-STARRING: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!
THE MOST REQUESTED STORY OF ALL!

50¢ 199 OCT
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
BLAZING BATTLE ACTION WITH
SGT. FURY
AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS
THE MOST OFF-THE-WALL ADVENTURE IN A MARVEL MAG THIS MONTH!
OUT OF THE STEAMING SAHARA
PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE STRANGEST BATTLE-THRILLER OF THE YEAR!

STURM UND DRANG

Letters to the Editor

A GRAPHIC REVIEW

ARNIE FUTZ
Brooklyn New York

You guys suck syphilitic dog colons. Your review of HULK #269 was completely wrongheaded. Why, that was one of the most inspiring, multi-layered and, yes, Zolaesquely Humanistic comic books I've ever read, and anybody who can't see that is either a pseudo-intellectual poseur with, at best, only a superficial acquaintance with Kierkegaard or the offspring of a mange-ridden hyaena and a Bulgarian yogurt-churner.

Until next time, I vomit in your face and defecate in your lap.

THE EDITORS REPLY: While we certainly don't agree with Arnie's opinion, and stand behind those stated in our original review, we can't help but appreciate the logical, intelligent and mature way in which Arnie presents his argument. We publish this magazine for people like you, Mr. Futz, and "viva la difference!"

GREEN DREAMS

RICKY BISHOP
Age 9
Salina Kansas

I just wanted to tell you that I really enjoy your magazine. The articles are interesting, the news is up to date, and the artwork's great!

The only things I don't understand sometimes are your reviews. Like the one titled "Green is the Color of Puke", about HULK #269. I don't know what you meant when you wrote that it had "...regressively sub-Nietschean implications that totally obliterated any pretensions to Zolaesque Humanism," but I think you meant that you didn't like it.

Personally, I found that issue of the HULK very entertaining. I thought it was well-drawn, there was lots of action, and the plot was suspenseful. But that's just my opinion. Anyway, thanks again for a great fanzine.

THE EDITORS REPLY: It's letters like these that really make my blood boil. Where do you get off, Bishop, tossing around your opinions like some New York Review of Books critic, when it's painfully obvious that you haven't the slightest understanding of either Kierkegaard or Jung, let alone Nietsche or Zola? By the way, with a name like Bishop, why aren't you studying for the priesthood instead of posing as an expert on comics? You might get assigned to some rural parish in the Andes, which is the only place you're going to find people ignorant enough to believe that you have some intelligence. Anyway, don't write to us again. This magazine is for serious intellectuals concerned with a vital art form, and there's no room in it for poseurs.

SPIDEY VS. DAN RATHER

MYRON FUMBLE
Cleveland Ohio

I don't know, sometimes I get to thinking about all the problems in the world. What with the economy collapsing, politicians hocking the constitution for votes, acid rain, El Salvador, Poland, the Falkland Islands, Iran, Iraq, Cambodia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland and Lake Erie, I just can't seem to get interested any more in stuff like who's Daredevil's latest girlfriend or is Spiderman going to beat Dr. Octopus for the forty-seventh time.

Is something wrong with me? I'm 38, divorced, and I have a peptic ulcer.

THE EDITORS REPLY: Who do you think

we are, Dear Abby? Look, sure you've got problems--everybody's got problems--but think about this: Has anything that's happened to you been nearly as traumatic as what Ben Grimm has to put up with? You're unhappy, huh? How do you think the Silver Surfer feels? The world may be in lousy shape, but it still looks a whole lot better than what's left of Krypton!

So quit moping, man! Get off your ass. GET REAL! Get back to reading comics and it'll all be fine as long as the light stays on.

STAR SORES

R*Y T*O*A*
Disneyland Ca

I don't know what I'm gonna' do. Writing for D.C. is the pits, they keep changing my stuff and they want me to find them a C*N*N and a S*A* W*R* the way I did for Marvel only I've already used up a lifetime of blind luck.

Groan I still remember when Howie and I got bounced off the *T*R *A*S book 'cause L*c*s*i*m "suggested" that Marvel use a different writer/artist team on the book. I mean, how was I to know that Howie would get bored with the book before he drew his first issue? How was I to know that *e*r*e L*c*s wouldn't dig the idea of my introducing a six foot green rabbit into the strip? It worked wonders for Jimmy Stewart! I even used every cliche' I could overturn, like When In Doubt Use A Dinosaur. When they told me I was being replaced I said, "Oh yeah? You can't fire me from this book 'cause I quit!" That's what I told everybody, too. So Marvel knew different. So what! Did you know? Nyahh! It wasn't easy keeping that secret, though. Didn't you notice how testy I was whenever anyone criticized my issues? I can't stand it when anyone criticizes what I write. Have you ever seen me say that anyone's criticism of even one page of my stuff is justified? Sigh. You can't win, though. Now that I'm writing for movies I'll have to deal with Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel--on national TV yet!

ACIDIC PERCEPTION

J*M*S V*N H*S*
S*N D*E*O C*

Well, it's been less than six months since my last letter to you so I thought I'd better write in and make a fool of myself again, or at the very least subject myself to some abuse. You got the spurs and chains handy? It's time for another masochism tango!

Hmmm, let's see...can I think of anything intemperate to say? How about if I assassinate the character of one of your interview subjects? That's always good for a howler.

Maybe I should indulge in another anti-drug tirade. I had one of those published in FUTURE LIFE, too.

Looks like I'm fresh out of dumb ideas. Maybe if I sent a bound volume of your letter columns to the Washington Post...

*THE EDITORS REPLY: Gee, J*m, things get awful dull around here when you don't write in. You always sound like you just dropped acid and want to talk to your typewriter. Some day we might even let you write something real for us if we could figure out a place for your "unique" point of view. I wish I could think of some more euphamisms for not liking your stuff. STARDOG really pays you money for those puff pieces? Maybe I'm in the wrong line of work...* ●

fans have the darndest fetishes...

AND SINCE OUR "GOOD GIRL ART 'ZINE" IS DOING SO GREAT, I'VE DECIDED TO EXPAND OUR LINE!
NOW WE'll ALSO BE PUBLISHING. "NIGGERS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS".
AND... "THE BOAT PEOPLE BLUES".
I'M SURE THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND OUR GIRLIE BOOK, WILL ENJOY THESE JUST AS MUCH.
J. Squid '79

Graphic Traffic

FOURTEEN CARAT SLEAZE

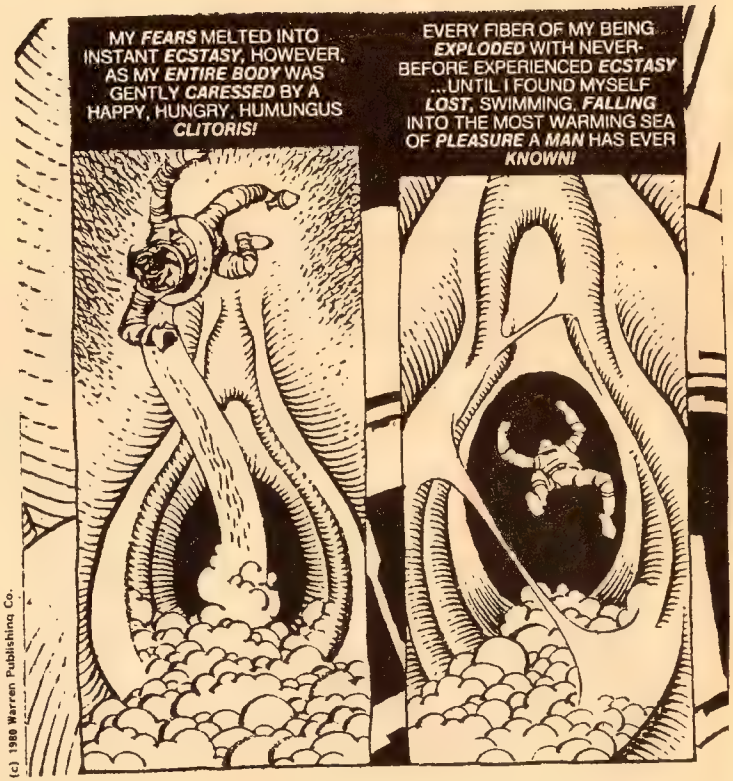
1994 No. Twenty-Two
December 1981
A Warren Magazine
Writers: Rich Margopoulos
Bill DuBay
Timothy Moriarty
Artists: Alex Nino
Delando Nino
Peter Hsu
Rudy Nebres
Reuben Yandoc
Editor: Bill Dubay
Cover: Fastner and Larson

For those of you who like your Sci-Fi "hot" and your quivering vagina graphically rendered, this magazine is manna from Heaven! No more do we have to pine away at the newsstand because we're too young to buy PLAYBOY and PENTHOUSE or (*gasp*) HUSTLER, because someone who thinks just like all us pimply young virgins has created something which anyone who pursues one-handed reading material can appreciate. I mean, this magazine has everything: Full frontal nudity, lesbianism and even characters with names like (*Oh God*) Little Beaver!

The Sci-Fi is the most incredible I've ever experienced, and I do mean experienced! Get this passage from the first story, "Young Sigmund Pavlov!" by Bill DuBay and Alex Nino:

> Every fiber of my being *exploded* with never-before experienced *ecstasy*...until I found myself *lost*, swimming, *falling* into the most warming sea of *pleasure a man* has ever *known!*

And just guess what the giant oriface he's falling into looks like! Boy, you sure guessed it! Man, I ain't never seen Sci-Fi like this. This gives new meaning to imagination! On top of that, if you buy two copies of this issue you can cut out this story, lay (yuk!) all the pages next to each other in order and they form what they call a massive *brainscape!* Can you dig having <u>that</u> on the wall of your room?


MY *FEARS* MELTED INTO INSTANT *ECSTASY*, HOWEVER, AS MY *ENTIRE BODY* WAS GENTLY *CARESSED* BY A HAPPY, HUNGRY, HUMUNGUS *CLITORIS!*
EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING *EXPLODED* WITH NEVER-BEFORE EXPERIENCED *ECSTASY* ...UNTIL I FOUND MYSELF *LOST*, SWIMMING, *FALLING* INTO THE MOST WARMING SEA OF *PLEASURE* A *MAN* HAS EVER *KNOWN!*
(c) 1980 Warren Publishing Co.

I mean, I thought I had seen all the special effects there were to see when I saw STAR WARS, but this wrapped my eyeballs twice around my head!

The cover alone is enough to get you excited, what with its neat drawing of a monster holding someone who looks like Pia Zadora, but that ain't nothin' compared to "Ariel Hart" by Bill DuBay and Peter Hsu. The art looks almost like photographs, and nobody has any hair down you-know-where!

The girls never have any clothes on and they keep touching each other and there's even panels of nothin' but vaginas and word balloons and it's almost too good to be true! It's every 14 year old's dream all steamy and warm with monsters and sex and tits and people doin' it *three* at a time like on the splash page of "Mike Marauder" by Rich Margopoulos and Reuben Yandoc!

It's a mag about the world we always dreamed we wanted to

be in. Everybody's fighting monsters, flying spaceships and getting naked after they've blasted the shit out of the monsters. It's terrific! I still can't believe it's real. The guys who do this mag never gave up being 14 and all us kids can really appreciate that.

Oh yeah, in case you're missing any STAR WARS toys, the inside front cover has an ad for all the real good ones! ●

HAVE IT YOUR WAY: DEEPLY FELT OR DEEPLY FRIED

BY ROBERT STRAUSS

Adventures Of The Big Boy #301
Quarter Century Collectors' Edition

Adventures Of Pioneer Pete
Twenty Great Years

Two milestones in comics history, two legends that continue to grow, two great places to eat. Yet, are longevity, reasonable prices and tasty chicken enough, or do such well-known and influential comics series owe their public more after all these faithful years? Should they be providing us with spiritual nourishment as readily as they do with catsup and a choice of pickles?

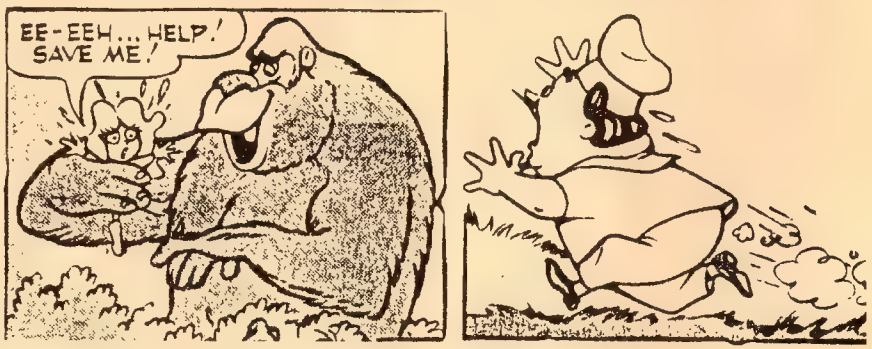
In comparing the BIG BOY to the PIONEER PETE anniversary issues, one definitely finds two different views on the subject. While BIG BOY is very forthrightly socially conscious, with stories concerning good working habits, the correct use of great power, and the proper way to treat the family pet, PIONEER PETE leans much more toward the glamorous PEOPLE magazine-style celebrity expose with its recapping of the origin of Pete, his friends and his restaurant.

A deeper examination into the creative forces behind each book reveals how they logically developed along different paths. Big Boys are primarily tradition-bound, sit-down restaurants of a nationwide chain. Their point of view would naturally be conservative, civically and socially oriented (as in "please pass the relish"). Pioneer Chicken Stands, on the other hand, even though they sometimes provide sit-down facilities, are for the most part take-out places, hence the more liberal, fast-lane lifestyle approach. Also, being primarily located on the West Coast, the pioneer chain would naturally be more heavily influenced by the Hollywood chic/escapist attitude (another reason why you'll find more and better puzzle pages in PIONEER PETE than you will in BIG BOY).

I'm not saying that comics should be either relevant or escapist. I feel the medium is big enough to accomodate both. And besides, I've had good and bad meals at both Pioneer and Big Boy. I'm really just very glad that, in America, there is always a choice, whether it's between social consciousness or star-studded tomfoolery, hamburgers or fried chicken, eating at a table or eating in the car. As long as such an atmosphere of freedom and variety remains, creativity will always be encouraged. ●

AS BIG BOY AND DOLLY RACE HOME
LOOK, BIG BOY, A FIRE!
LET'S HELP OUT!
WOW! WHAT A HELP!
I'VE GOT THE CHILDREN!
I'VE GOT A FEW SENIOR CITIZENS!
NOW TO HELP THE FIREMEN PUT OUT THE FIRE!

Whether it is Big Boy (above) or Pioneer Pete (below), in America there is always a choice, whether it's between social consciousness or star-studded tomfoolery, hamburgers or fried chicken, eating at a table or eating in the car.



SUPER-ANGST

BY ROBERT STRAUSS

The New Adventures Of Superboy V.3#32
August 1982
A DC Comic
Writer: Cary Bates
Artist: Kurt Schaffenber
Editor: Julius Schwartz
Colorist: Jerry Serpe
Letterer: Ben Oda

Bates and Schaffenber continue to make SUPERBOY one of the most emotionally stimulating, psychologically resonant books on the stands today.

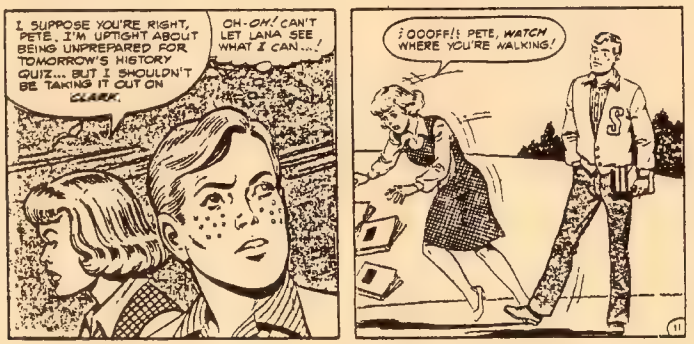
Of course, they have a rich situation to work with. The very fundamental emotions of friendship, love, bitchiness and betrayal are intrinsic to the young Clark Kent's relationship with his classmate Pete Ross and Lana Lang. And what high schooler can't relate to a meek, dorky guy who doesn't have too many friends and girls won't talk to, who is secretly a great, potent, powerful hero?

The last panel on page 7 is a perfect example of how well Bates and Schaffenber (didn't he used to be called Schaffenberg?) understand this situation. Just like Mary Ferguson, a girl I knew in high school. Lana thinks of Clark as nothing more than somebody to copy history notes from. All she can do is complain about his not being there and what an inconvenience it is to her, oblivious to the fact that he's busy out saving astronauts from certain doom.

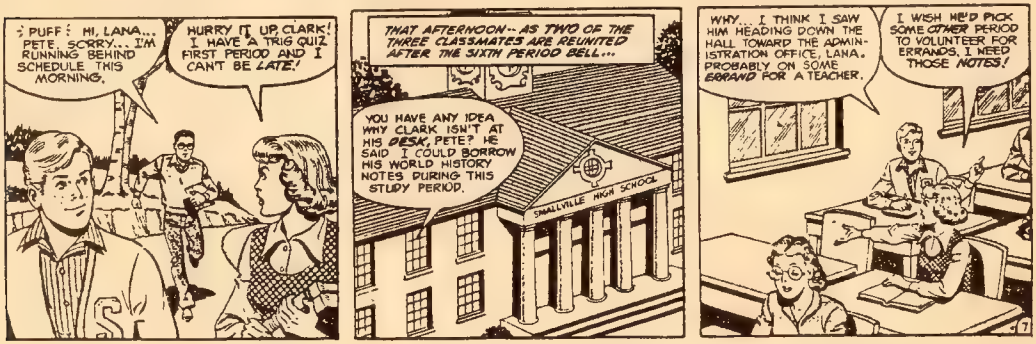
But look at how Pete Ross sticks up for Clark against Lana's short-sighted attacks. He knows what Clark's probably doing, because he knows the man's true worth. I had a friend like that, too. His name was Jim. He'd always stick up for me. Just like the way Pete trips Lana up to protect Clark's secret on pages 11 & 12, Jim would always slug Mary in the arm whenever she'd call me "Monkey Handshake" or "Yellowstone Face".

Yeah, Jim was my friend. Sure he was. He really had me fooled. That is until the day I went over to his house and caught him and Mary Ferguson in the garage without any pants! My pal Jim. Hah! It was just like at the end of the story, when Pete Ross actually turns out to be some hairy space villain in disguise. I know just how Superboy must have felt. Why, if I'D've been him instead of an overweight history major back in Jim's garage that afternoon, you know what I would've done? I would've taken my heat vision and fried their...

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 496)


I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, PETE. I'M UPTIGHT ABOUT BEING UNPREPARED FOR TOMORROW'S HISTORY QUIZ... BUT I SHOULDN'T BE TAKING IT OUT ON CLARK.
OH-OH! CAN'T LET LANA SEE WHAT I CAN...!
¡OOOFF!¡ PETE, WATCH WHERE YOU'RE WALKING!
(c) 1980 DC Comics Inc.
11

Pete Ross (the only character in comics who suffers from acne) trips Lana to keep Clark's secret safe. But it's all a sham! He's no more loyal than my childhood friend, Jim, was, and I bet that the day will come when Clark catches Pete in the garage with Lana as she discovers why their town is called Smallville!


¡PUFF¡ HI, LANA... PETE. SORRY... I'M RUNNING BEHIND SCHEDULE THIS MORNING.
HURRY IT UP, CLARK! I HAVE A TRIG QUIZ FIRST PERIOD AND I CAN'T BE LATE!
THAT AFTERNOON-- AS TWO OF THE THREE CLASSMATES ARE REUNITED AFTER THE SIXTH PERIOD BELL...
YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY CLARK ISN'T AT HIS DESK, PETE? HE SAID I COULD BORROW HIS WORLD HISTORY NOTES DURING THIS STUDY PERIOD.
SMALLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
WHY... I THINK I SAW HIM HEADING DOWN THE HALL TOWARD THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, LANA. PROBABLY ON SOME ERRAND FOR A TEACHER.
I WISH HE'D PICK SOME OTHER PERIOD TO VOLUNTEER FOR ERRANDS. I NEED THOSE NOTES!
7

Pete seemingly defending Clark from a seat where he can stare at Lana without her noticing. All she wants Clark for is his notes, but if she knew that he wasn't from Smallville and thus is "different" from everyone else there, but no, Jim, er, Pete will always be there, seeming to be on Clark's side while all the time worming his way in!

Unsung Heroes Of Comics...

Bradley Strepp

An Indicia Writer Speaks Out

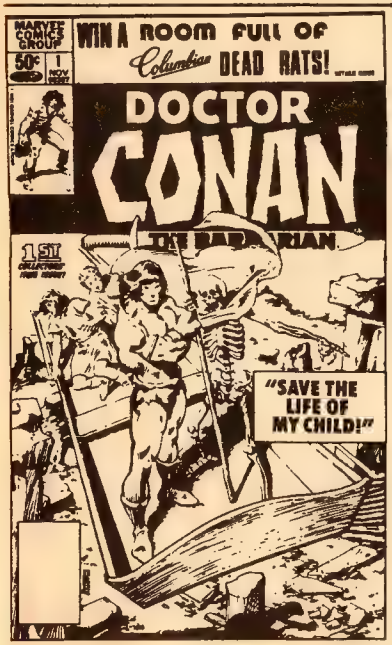
Whenever comics fans gather, the talk inevitably turns to praise and criticism of their favorite artists, writers and editors. Rarely, however, is mention made of the many dedicated, talented men and women without whose efforts the works of the creative superstars would never see the light of day. We're talking about the book-keepers, the ad salesmen, the printing contractors; the people who are the very life's blood of the comics industry.

BRADLEY STREPP has labored in the underappreciated field of indicia writing since the twilight of the Golden Age of comics in the late forties. He began his career at Fawcett where he faced his first great professional challenge:

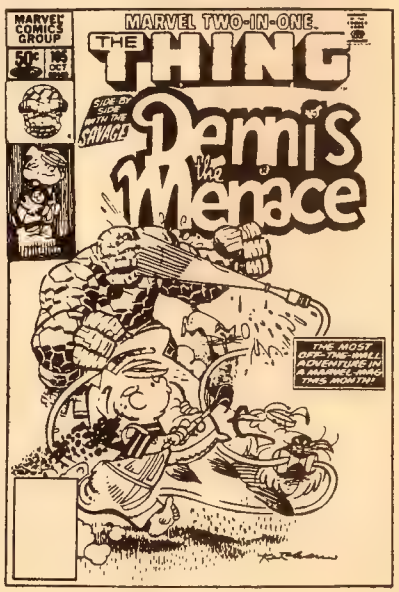
"They came down one day and told me that CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES was bein' cut back from every two weeks to monthly. Now, CAPTAIN MARVEL was unique--a chance for true creative expression. It was the only book where I could write it as 'published every two weeks' or 'every other week' or even 'twice monthly', dependin' on what mood I was in that day. But when I got the order to change it to monthly, which you just can't put very expressively besides 'monthly', well, I had to reign in my creative urges and do the job I was hired to do. So there it was one day, just said 'monthly'. And you know what? There was somethin' good about it. Simple. Elegant. Monthly. It was then that I learned about pride in craftsmanship, and with all due modesty, I believe I've been one of the top professionals in the trade ever since."

Strepp's record proves that out. From Fawcett he went on to work at Fiction House, Avon, Lev Gleason and EC, all the top companies in the business, when they were at their creative pinnacles. In 1955 he moved to Atlas Comics, which six years later evolved into the highly successful Marvel Group. Throughout the Marvel explosion of the Sixties and Seventies, Strepp kept it all straight, which has earned him the everlasting gratitude of archivists and collectors everywhere. Can there ever be too much praise for the man who made sure that those early issues of CAPTAIN AMERICA all read "formerly TALES OF SUSPENSE" at the bottom of the first page?

Strepp worked at Marvel until early this spring when creative differences with editor-in-chief Jim Shooter resulted in Strepp's resignation. He is currently living with his cat in a one-room suite at the Johnson Hotel on East 14th Street in New York City, where this interview took place. His current interests include wine bottle collecting and waiting



These up-coming issues had their indicia written by Bradley Strepp before his unfortunate falling out with Jim Shooter.



for someone at DC Comics to return his calls.

—ROBERT STRAUSS

EDITOR'S NOTE:

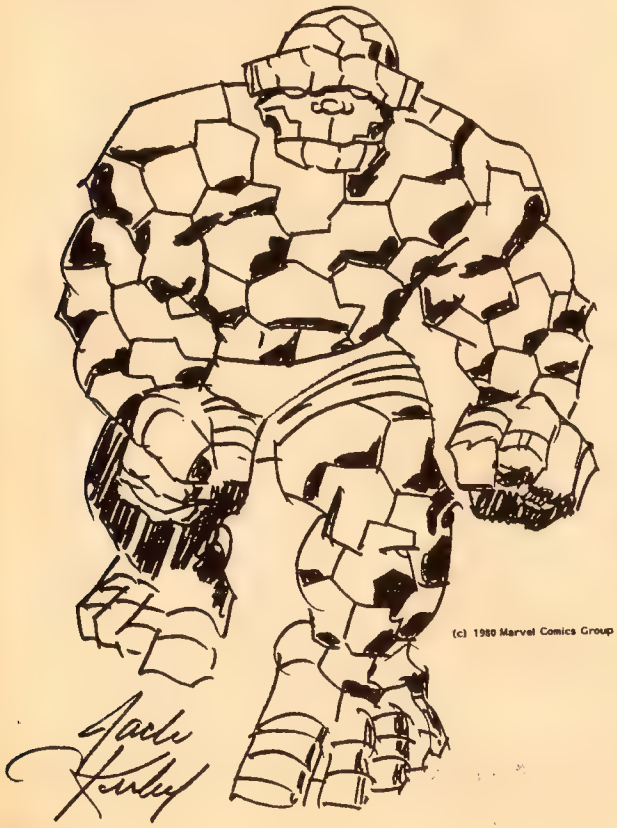
This interview was conducted before the tragic death of Jim Shooter. We are printing it in full, however, because we feel it has great historical significance, especially now that Mr. Strepp seems to have disappeared without a trace and probably won't be granting any more interviews even if they do find him.

JOURNAL: *Could you give me some idea of what it was like to write indicia in the golden days of the Fifties, compared to today?*

STREPP: No Comparison. Those were great days back then, y'know, when men were real men and knew what counted. Guys like Truman, Ike, Joe McCarthy. They kept this country workin'. Kids knew their place, too. They had respect for their elders or else, BAM! The next thing they knew they were stuffin' mortars in Korea...

JOURNAL: *Ah, about the comics...*

STREPP: Oh yeah. Well, it was a lot tougher back then. More of a challenge. But the people you worked with were the salt of the earth. Take Gaines over at EC. Now, before that New Trend came in, he'd be changin' the title of the books every other issue. And who do you think had to keep track of everything for the goddamn Post Office? You're lookin' at him. It was a fuckin' nightmare, believe me, worse than any of the stuff Ingles and Feldstein would talk about at lunch. But Gaines was a real human bein', y'know? He knew how to treat you, so that made it alright. Why, whenever he'd send you out for coffee, he'd always throw in an extra dime so you could get your own donut. Not like these snot-nosed kids in their pin-stripe suits today. (swig).



Pardon me, I'm bein' a terrible host. Would you like a glass? I can ring down for a clean one...

JOURNAL: *No thank you. I have a peptic ulcer. Could you tell me what it was like at Atlas in the pre-Marvel days?*

STREPP: Could I ever! Boy, now there was a job--toughest one I ever had. Y'see, Goodman had all these dummy companies set up to, y'know, get a little edge on Uncle Sam. Anyway, each book had a different publisher listed, like AMAZING FANTASY was made by Pissface Publications, STRANGE TALES by Cornhole Comics or Bunny Balls Entertainment Corporation, et cetera, et cetera. It was some bitch keepin' all that straight. Sometimes, just for fun, I'd switch the publishers names around from issue to issue. The August JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY might be by Valium Ventures, the September one by Fartbreath Photo, Inc. Just a little game I used to play with myself. I've always enjoyed playing with myself. Nobody noticed. Nobody cared.

But these days, you don't get a chance to do stuff like that. Hell, the indicia's gotten so streamlined over the last ten years, there's just no challenge in it any more. The only changes ever made nowadays are when some pin-striped asshole from Cadence gets appointed vice-president in charge of head-giving (swig)...

Sure you wouldn't like a snort? It's okay, my lips are clean.

JOURNAL: *I'm sure. Now, about the circumstances that led to your resignation...*

STREPP: Don't get me started! Don't get me started! Look, personally I have nothing against Jim Shooter, except for maybe his taste in suits. I'm sure he did what he thought was right. But there's just somethin' about his attitude that, if he knows what's good for him he better get straightened out. There are a lot of people in this industry with weird minds. I know, I worked at EC. Anyway, all these people with weird, clever minds--rub 'em the wrong way and who knows what they'll do? Like this one guy I know, who shall remain nameless, works a lot with the coloring inks. You know what he told me happens to your skin if the Red ink #2 gets injected into your bloodstream? Well, it's really somethin' to see. It's just revol-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 286)

(c) 1980 Marvel Comics Group

I WILL NOT BE MOCKED
RBCC
Adams

In the past, the RBCC has been criticized as being, perhaps, "too serious." Although I've never really thought that to be the case (Don Rosa had strips running almost continuously from #130 through #148), never let it be said that the RBCC didn't enjoy a good laugh (as all the satirical material in #150 will readily attest).

One of comicdom's premiere humorists is Harvey Kurtzman, and whatever you may think of MAD magazine today, no one will dispute the genius of those first two dozen issues of the title which Harvey edited and largely wrote. Robert Strauss takes a look at these books and their enduring humor and how today's humorists could certainly benefit from studying Kurtzman more closely because have you looked at the so-called "funny" comic books that are around now?

Jim Korkis provides a double-header led off by an examination of the much sought after Duck book Pirate's Gold in which Jim establishes who really drew it and that it isn't all Barks as many fans believe, but that there is other credit due here.

Jim also reports in on a quirky little ad which appeared in the Los Angeles area a couple years ago which was clearly inspired by the work of Tex Avery, although no one involved seems able or willing to admit to it.

Even though Don Rosa is unable to continue his Pertwillaby strip in the RBCC, fans are by no means being denied access to his work as he does a weekly strip in a Louisville newspaper which has had the first half a hundred installments collected into a book with subsequent episodes running in The Comic Reader. This issue I review the Capt. Kentucky collection and explain what makes it special.

In "Critique" this issue we see some more spot illustrations from Interfan, as well as some panel cartoons by Bill Rotsler and Mark Evanier. I have many of these which will continue appearing in the RBCC and what makes them especially interesting is that Bill drew the cartoons first, putting down whatever odd image that came to mind, and then Mark Evanier created the word balloons based on what he perceived the cartoon to be.

Parody, such as what Kurtzman did in MAD, has always been a favorite of mine and what better source of parody is there than comics? Our CONTENTIOUS JOURNAL parody this issue is along the lines of what Jay Zilber did a few years back with his FANDOM FUNNIES, in fact about 90% of this parody is on comics in general much more than it is on TCJ specifically.

Early this year, STARLOG magazine, which some of you should have noticed that I write for (they've published a dozen articles by me), planned to do an April Fools issue, but they wound up curtailing most of those plans. Simultaneous to that I had planned by own parody of the magazine which this times uses bad science fiction as the object with the STARLOG format as the conduit to carry off the parody. A newcomer to the RBCC, KEN HOLLAND, did much of the detailed renderings in that section and RBCC assistant editor John Turek created the advertisement for STAR TREK III on the final page of that parody.

Steve Bissette embarks this issue as our resident reviewer of unusual and special books.

We also have a 3 Stooges section which is also pretty unusual.

RBCC CONTRIBUTORS

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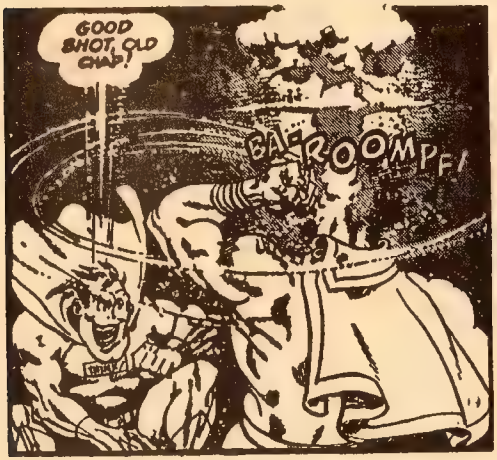
WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT COMICS



by Robert Strauss

When one discusses the great innovators in the comic book field, one is naturally compelled to speak of Harvey Kurtzman. His incorporation of realism, irony and cinematic panel composition into the EC war books, FRONTLINE COMBAT and TWO-FISTED TALES, was revolutionary in its time and, although rarely matched for visual and dramatic power, has ben imitated to this day. And then there was MAD, fresher and even more influential than the war books.

Like most innovators, Kurtzman was a driven man. His hatred of war and obsessions with detail and accuracy could be seen on every page of his war books. Like most humorists, Kurtzman was an angry man, and his outrage over hypocrisy, pretentiousness and above all lousy entertainment oozed out of every panel of the MAD satires he wrote. So, while from its inception MAD made fun of everything from television to advertising to poetry, it's not surprising that Kurtzman took special delight in his assaults on one of the lousiest, most underrealized mediums of all; the medium he worked in, the comics.

It was a natural. Kurtzman's humor springs from an exaggeration of the inherently ridiculous beyond the point of the absurd, and there's no art form with a more ridiculous set of conventions than comics. While this often resulted in labored, empty parody, such as Bat-Boy turning out to be a vampire in MAD #8, it also provided a springboard for Kurtzman's most bizarre and inventive pieces. Telling examinations of American attitudes, especially those regarding sex and competition, emerged from the sight gag-choked panels. In the bargain, artists like Jack Davis, Bill Elder, John Severin and especially Wally Wood were given opportunities to pay irreverent homage to admired influences, heroes

and colleagues.

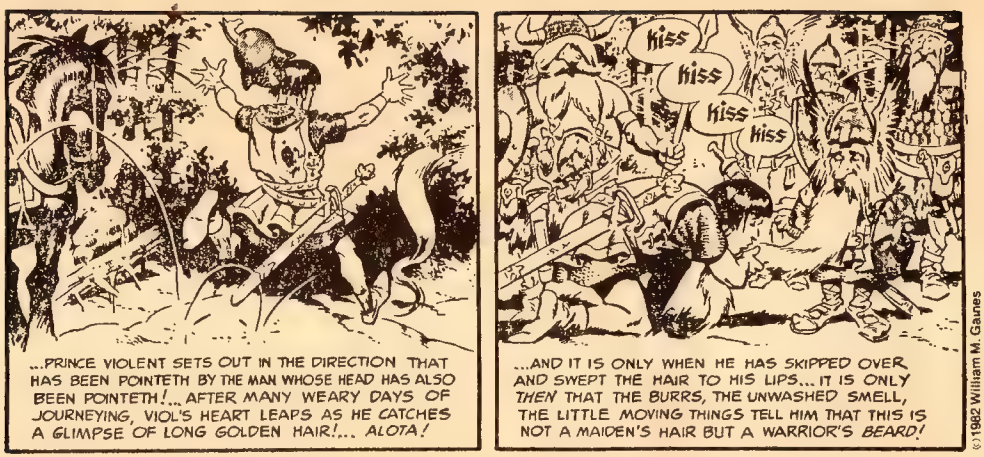
To begin with the most obvious, Kurtzman's MAD revelled in sex. Or perhaps revelled isn't the right word, because while there was certainly a lot of it going on, and on the surface the prevailing presentation of it seemed to be innocent enough depictions of a healthy adolescent boy's fantasies, a closer examination reveals recurring strains of sado-masochism, misogyny and a fear of women bordering on the psychotic running throughout the series of comic satires (and spilling over regularly into MAD's other departments). The unquenchable desire to disrobe Little Annie Fanny that Kurtzman's pursued so obsessively for the past twenty-odd years is a logical evolution of the sexual attitudes found in his earlier MAD work.

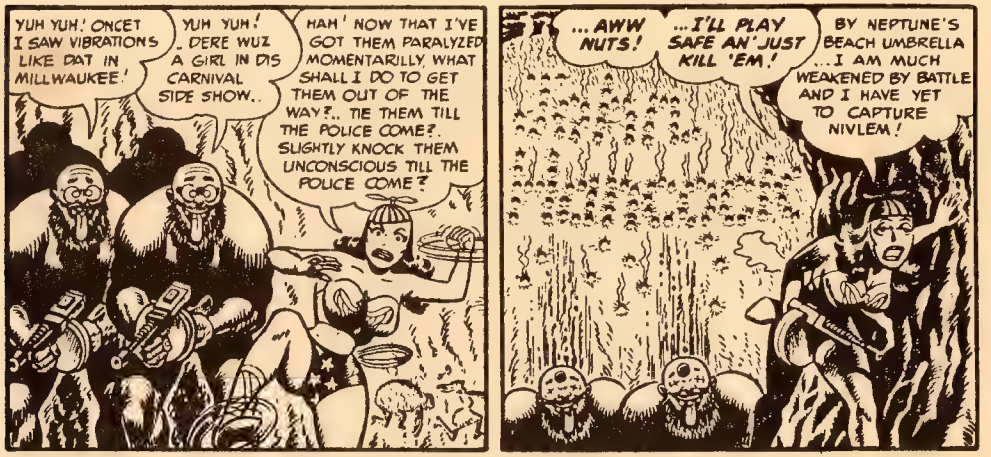
In MAD #4, "Superduperman" turns the fantasy-fulfilling premise that a meek, uninteresting man is actually the most powerful, desirable man on the planet into a celebration of masochism that's closer to the actual implication of the Superman story (Clark Kent, after all, is an imaginary submissive role that Superman chooses to play) than any fantasies of male perfection might be. In "Superduperman", Lois Pain (has there ever been a more aptly-named chaaracter in the history of satire?) slaps, heaps abuse on and walks all over the wretched Clark Bent(make that two aptly-named characters), who eats up every bit of it and only desires her more. Even in his victorious Superduperman guise, h can't surmount her disdain, and she slugs him and walks all over him again. This panel, by the way, is one of the most psychologically resonant ever drawn. Not only are a bunch of Wood's buck-toothed children pointing and laughing derisively at the degraded Man of Steel lying dazed in the gutter, but Lois' footprints on his chest cross a design that reads "WELCOME" where his "S" symbol should be!

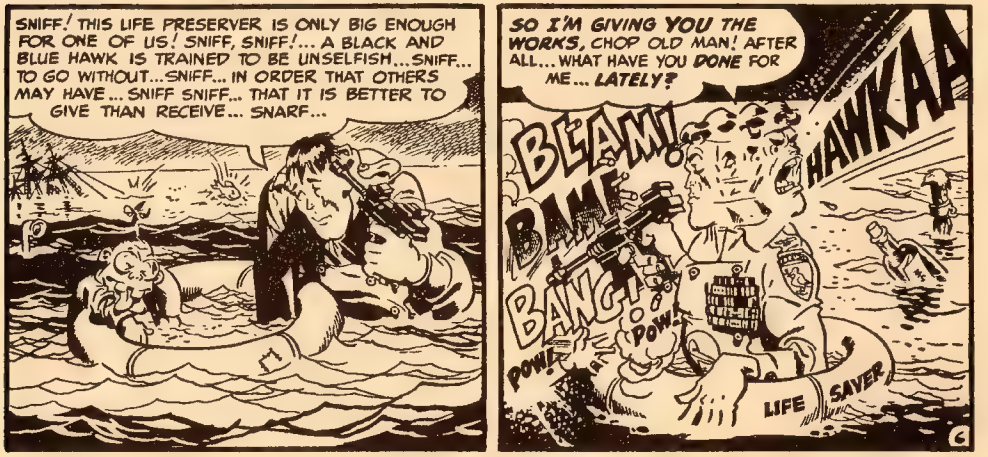
"G.I. Shmoe", MAD #10's frontal assault on gung-ho, glamorized war comics, gives graphic realization to male fears of deceptive, powerful women as a U.S. Army squad is demobilized by a

...WATER... FOOD... FOOD... WATER! GOTTA GET STRENGTH BACK... JUST NEED SOME WATER... FOOD... WATER...
HUH!
HAWKAP
SHMMER DOWN, BOY! IT'S ONLY ME AGAIN!
DON'T GET EXCITED JUST BECAUSE YOU SEE THIS GUN!
WAIT! BEFORE YOU KILL ME... WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME ONE THING! WHERE, OH WHERE, ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE THAT REVOLUTION ROBESPIERRE TRIED TO TELL US ABOUT? WHERE? WHERE WHERE? WHERE?
WELL, I'LL TELL YOU, HAWK HONEY! IT WAS RIGHT HERE! AND THE REVOLUTION WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS!
...OH YES! IN CASE YOU DIDN'T RECOGNIZE IT... THIS PLACE GOES BY NAME OF BLACK AND BLUE HAWK ISLAND!
...BYE!
POCKETA POCKETA
END 7
©1982 William M. Gaines

The Dragging Lady knocks 'em dead, and they love it!


...PRINCE VIOLENT SETS OUT IN THE DIRECTION THAT HAS BEEN POINTETH BY THE MAN WHOSE HEAD HAS ALSO BEEN POINTETH!... AFTER MANY WEARY DAYS OF JOURNEYING, VIOL'S HEART LEAPS AS HE CATCHES A GLIMPSE OF LONG GOLDEN HAIR!... ALOTA!
kiss
kiss
kiss
kiss
...AND IT IS ONLY WHEN HE HAS SKIPPED OVER AND SWEPT THE HAIR TO HIS LIPS... IT IS ONLY THEN THAT THE BURRS, THE UNWASHED SMELL, THE LITTLE MOVING THINGS TELL HIM THAT THIS IS NOT A MAIDEN'S HAIR BUT A WARRIOR'S BEARD!
©1982 William M. Gaines


YUH YUH! ONCET I SAW VIBRATIONS LIKE DAT IN MILLWAUKEE!
YUH YUH! DERE WUZ A GIRL IN DIS CARNIVAL SIDE SHOW..
HAH! NOW THAT I'VE GOT THEM PARALYZED MOMENTARILLY, WHAT SHALL I DO TO GET THEM OUT OF THE WAY?.. TIE THEM TILL THE POLICE COME?. SLIGHTLY KNOCK THEM UNCONSCIOUS TILL THE POLICE COME?
...AWW NUTS!
...I'LL PLAY SAFE AN' JUST KILL 'EM!
BY NEPTUNE'S BEACH UMBRELLA ...I AM MUCH WEAKENED BY BATTLE AND I HAVE YET TO CAPTURE NIVLEM!


SNIFF! THIS LIFE PRESERVER IS ONLY BIG ENOUGH FOR ONE OF US! SNIFF, SNIFF!... A BLACK AND BLUE HAWK IS TRAINED TO BE UNSELFISH... SNIFF... TO GO WITHOUT... SNIFF... IN ORDER THAT OTHERS MAY HAVE... SNIFF SNIFF... THAT IT IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE... SNARF...
SO I'M GIVING YOU THE WORKS, CHOP OLD MAN! AFTER ALL... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME... LATELY?
BLAM!
BAM!
BANG!
POW!
POW!
HAWKAA
LIFE SAVER

Some of Kurtzman's 2-panel jokes.

battalion of seductive Korean girls, all of whom repeat the same, unreasonable demand to their bewitched captives: "Hey Joe, You got gum?" Only a squad of rolling pin-toting WACS saves the day, but even these blonde-haired amazons demand gum in payment from the poor guys..

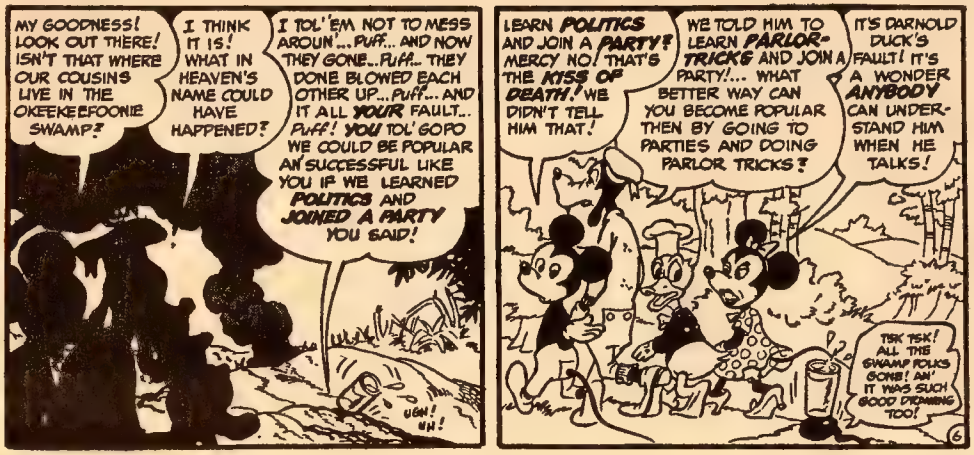
S/M imagery became most blatant in MAD #6's "Teddy and the Pirates", wherein the Dragging Lady (where oh where did Kurtzman get his genius for these loaded yet deceptively simple pun-names?) whips, slugs and shoots husky male members of her crew, all of whom submit docily with a meek "Yes, master". Boss Hawk loses control of his men to a leather -clad, skull-earringed dominatrix in MAD #5's "Black and Blue Hawks".

The masochistic themes in some of the Kurtzman comic satires are counter-balanced by the misogynistic themes of others. "Flesh Garden" (MAD #11) ends with Flesh kicking a whiny Dale into a rocketship and sending her back to Earth alone while he and Dr. Zark stay behind to enjoy the hedonistic pleasures of life on Mong's planet. "Starchie" (MAD #12) gets so annoyed by Biddy's displays of affection that he chases her out of a fifth-floor window with a broken bottle. The kidnappers of "Little Orpahn Melvin" (MAD #9) are constantly shooting the poor girl out of a cannon or running her over with trains.

The unkindest fate of all is reserved for comics' most powerful, and hence most threatening, heroine. "Woman Wonder" (MAD #10) battles the malevolent Nivlem, and ends up defeated, stomped on and kicked over a goalpost by the evil genius. To make matters worse, Nivlem turns out to be none other than Steve Adore, the sweetheart of Wonder Woman's alter-ego Diana Banana. The last panel shows her subdued and slaving over a hot stove while half a dozen screaming brats demolish the house and Steve reads his paper in a living room chair. A caption assures us that now " . . . Steve can even knock her down in boxing!"

The sexual attitudes expressed in MAD comics were typical of those found in other media of the era. Film noir movies and paperback novels of the time (Kurtzman's editorship on MAD lasted from October, 1952 to May, 1955, and for five issues of the magazine format MAD after that) were filled with the neurotic fantasies of males who felt threatened by the defense plant-trained, self-sufficient women and repressive atmostphere of the postwar era. The sexual ambiguity at the root of these fears reached its fullest expression in MAD #13's "Prince Violent!", in which the beautiful maiden Alota shies away from Prince Viol throughout the story because she's certain that anyone who wears a page-boy hairdo like his must really be a woman.

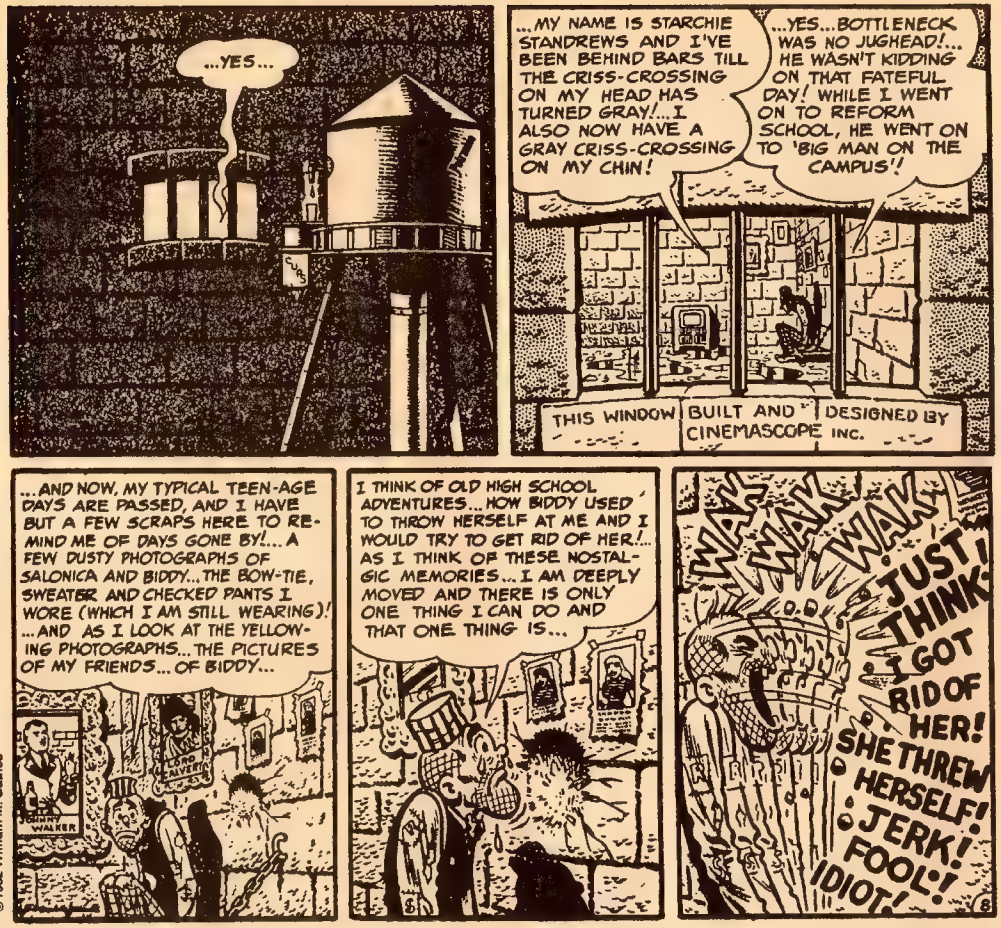
Competition, fueled by a stubborn streak of paranoia (it was us versus the Russkies then folks, just like now, only there seemed to be a lot more of them then), which just happens to be the basis of practically every comic-book plot ever written as well as a hallowed American institution, is the second major theme which reverberates through Kurtzman's comic satires. Superduperman, when he's not grovelling after Lois Pain, engages in a duel to the death with his rival Captain Marbles (in the satire, as in the real-life court decision that soon followed it, the Man of Steel wins). The two army buddies of "G.I. Shmoe", when not fighting commies, are whaling the tar out of each other over some woman. Prince Violent smashes everybody in sight from his own squire to a band of raiding Huns. Finally, after falling off of their horses during a joust, their armor too heavy to let them do anything more than crawl, Viol and a


MY GOODNESS! LOOK OUT THERE! ISN'T THAT WHERE OUR COUSINS LIVE IN THE OKEEKEEFOONIE SWAMP?
I THINK IT IS! WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME COULD HAVE HAPPENED?
I TOL' 'EM NOT TO MESS AROUN'... PUFF... AND NOW THEY GONE.. PUFF.. THEY DONE BLOWED EACH OTHER UP... PUFF... AND IT ALL YOUR FAULT.. PUFF! YOU TOL' GOPO WE COULD BE POPULAR AN' SUCCESSFUL LIKE YOU IF WE LEARNED POLITICS AND JOINED A PARTY YOU SAID!
UGH! UH!
LEARN POLITICS AND JOIN A PARTY? MERCY NO! THAT'S THE KISS OF DEATH! WE DIDN'T TELL HIM THAT!
WE TOLD HIM TO LEARN PARLOR-TRICKS AND JOIN A PARTY!... WHAT BETTER WAY CAN YOU BECOME POPULAR THEN BY GOING TO PARTIES AND DOING PARLOR TRICKS?
IT'S DARNOLD DUCK'S FAULT! IT'S A WONDER ANYBODY CAN UNDERSTAND HIM WHEN HE TALKS!
TSK TSK! ALL THE SWAMP FOLKS GONE! AN' IT WAS SUCH GOOD DRINKING TOO!
6
©1982 William M. Gaines

Gopo Gossum, the ascendancy of parlor-tricks over politics.

©1982 William M. Gaines

Sound Effects: The closest thing to the illusion of motion on the static, printed page.


...YES...
...MY NAME IS STARCHIE STANDREWS AND I'VE BEEN BEHIND BARS TILL THE CRISS-CROSSING ON MY HEAD HAS TURNED GRAY!... I ALSO NOW HAVE A GRAY CRISS-CROSSING ON MY CHIN!
...YES...BOTTLENECK WAS NO JUGHEAD!... HE WASN'T KIDDING ON THAT FATEFUL DAY! WHILE I WENT ON TO REFORM SCHOOL, HE WENT ON TO 'BIG MAN ON THE CAMPUS'!
THIS WINDOW BUILT AND DESIGNED BY CINEMASCOPE INC.
...AND NOW, MY TYPICAL TEEN-AGE DAYS ARE PASSED, AND I HAVE BUT A FEW SCRAPS HERE TO REMIND ME OF DAYS GONE BY!... A FEW DUSTY PHOTOGRAPHS OF SALONICA AND BIDDY... THE BOW-TIE, SWEATER AND CHECKED PANTS I WORE (WHICH I AM STILL WEARING)! ...AND AS I LOOK AT THE YELLOWING PHOTOGRAPHS... THE PICTURES OF MY FRIENDS... OF BIDDY...
I THINK OF OLD HIGH SCHOOL ADVENTURES... HOW BIDDY USED TO THROW HERSELF AT ME AND I WOULD TRY TO GET RID OF HER!... AS I THINK OF THESE NOSTALGIC MEMORIES... I AM DEEPLY MOVED AND THERE IS ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO AND THAT ONE THING IS...
WAK WAK WAK
JUST! THINK! I GOT RID OF HER! SHE THREW HERSELF! JERK! FOOL! IDIOT!
© 1962 William M. Gaines

The end of Starchie, a poignant and rueful statement on the emotional effects of a wasted life.

rival knight settle their contest with a savage bout of thumb wrestling!

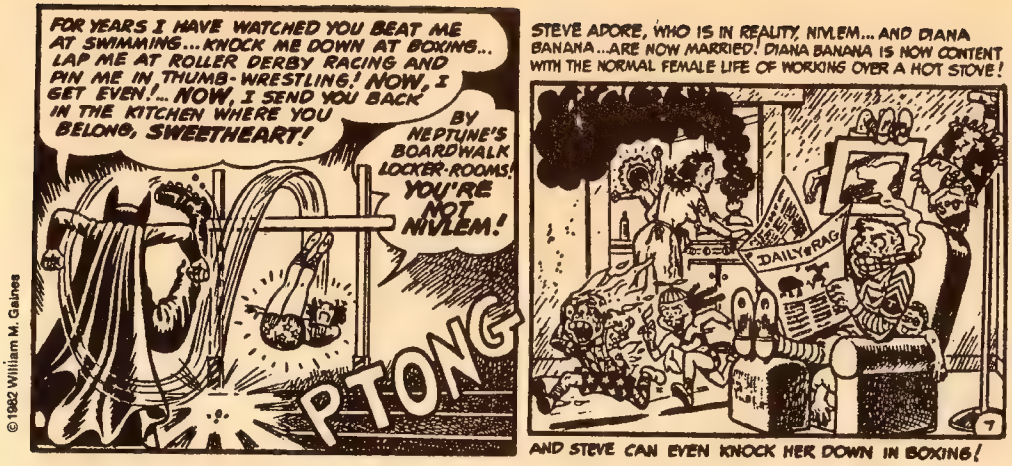
As in the Superduperman satire, Kurtzman excelled in depicting rivalries between characters from competing comic strips. In "Poopeye", (MAD #21), which naturally begins with Poopeye and Mazola Oil stomping each other senseless, our hero's embroiled in a series of fights, all instigated by that cute li'l waif Swee'back, with the likes of Mammy Jokeum, Melvin of the Apes and the ever popular Superduperman. We later discover that Swee'back is really a midget, "Mad Man Swee'back, the Brocolli King", who hates Poopeye for encouraging kids to eat spinach instead of Brocolli. Competing vegetables, even!

"Gopo Gossum" (MAD #23) returns to the swamp from visiting his "big-time cousins" in the city, with the idea in his head to teach his fellow critters about politics and parties. One thing leads to another as the political consciousness of the Okeekeefoonie Swamp rises, resulting in a power struggle and, ultimately, a nuclear holocaust. In two of the most bitingly funny panels ever printed, a goofy dog, a duck in a sailor suit and two very familiar-looking mice look over the charred, smoking remains of the swamp. The only survivor, a polliwog, blames these "big-time" cousins for the catastrophe. "It's all your fault", he says. "you tol' Gopo we could be popular and successful like you if we learned politics and joined a party!"

"We told him to learn *parlor-tricks* and join a party!" replies the duck. What better way can you become popular than by going to parties and doin parlor-tricks?"

"Politics?" a mouse adds. "Mercy no! That's the kiss of death!"

If this didn't make Walt Disney wince, MAD #19's "Mickey Rodent" certainly must have done the job. For pure competitive spite, nothing


FOR YEARS I HAVE WATCHED YOU BEAT ME AT SWIMMING...KNOCK ME DOWN AT BOXING... LAP ME AT ROLLER DERBY RACING AND PIN ME IN THUMB-WRESTLING! NOW, I GET EVEN!... NOW, I SEND YOU BACK IN THE KITCHEN WHERE YOU BELONG, SWEETHEART!
BY NEPTUNE'S BOARDWALK LOCKER-ROOMS! YOU'RE NOT NIVLEM!
PTONG
© 1982 William M. Gaines
STEVE ADORE, WHO IS IN REALITY, NIVLEM... AND DIANA BANANA...ARE NOW MARRIED! DIANA BANANA IS NOW CONTENT WITH THE NORMAL FEMALE LIFE OF WORKING OVER A HOT STOVE!
DAILY RAG
AND STEVE CAN EVEN KNOCK HER DOWN IN BOXING!

The end of Woman Wonder: The resurgence of male dominance.

matched this story of Mickey sneakily planning to get rid of his ostensible pal Darnald Duck for pushing his way into Mickey's act, and bringing all of his blasted relatives along with him. Mickey finally succeeds in stealing Darnald's clothes and locking him inside the duck cage at a zoo. The zoo's human attendants, fascinated by Darnald's mutated features and wordlike squawking, agree that the zoological society will get a big laugh out of this specimen, and if he gets too unmanageable, well, he can always by stuffed.

This hilariously vicious attack on the Disney ethos has an underlying realism of character (Mickey is motivated by fear for his future, compounded by jealousy of Darnold) that would be tantamount to anarchy in Disneyland. Kurtzman loved the very concept of anarchy, as evidenced by his cluttered panels, violent characters and explosions of kinetic action. Anarchy was the lynchpin of two of his finest comic satires, "Starchie" and "The Katchandhammer Kids"..

Starchie and Bottleneck are two high school racketeers who chainsmoke, shake down the lowerclassmen and beat the principal with blackjacks to improve their grades. Their girls, Biddy and Salonica, are pimple-faced dope addicts. As realistic as this might sound to any high school student of the seventies or eighties, in the fifties this type of behavior by middle class teenagers was practically unthinkable. Ultimately, Starchie is framed by his "pal" Bottleneck for killing Wedgie, the boss of a rival protection racket. In a final jail-cell sequence, light on the Kurtzman-Elder sight gags, Starchie regrets his past mistakes, too late for it to do any good. This last page is a poignant and rueful statement on the emotional effects of a wasted life, and while it might have been funny in its day, the effect of the end of "Starchie" on any of us who've lost friends to crime or drugs is so real, it hurts.

"The Katchandhammer Kids" (MAD #20) takes the mother strip's basic premise of mischievous little boys in a continuing battle with the authoritarian Kapitan to its ultimate lengths, turning the kids into revolutionary anarchists and the Kapitan into a Fascist defender of the bourgeois status quo. In what is probably Kurtzman's richest example of visual and thematic complexity, he and Elder manage to pay homage to Rube Goldberg with an intricate dog-bottle-donkey trap the kids set for the Kapitan, while at the same time embodying the thoughts of everyone from Freud to Lenin to Dr. Spock in the Kapitan's liberal friend Inspektor. The fact that the whole thing is written in ersatz German underlines these social implications further.

As the kids' assaults on the Kapitan grow more radical, from phoning him when he's showering to ruining his job interview to destroying his life savings, the Kapitan's reactionary punishments of the kids grow more severe, from simple spankings to bashing their heads into a tub of water to tying them to railroad tracks and flogging them. The result of all this is that years later the kids grow up to be wanted gangsters. The social implications of this eight-page strip are myriad and deep, moreso than all but a handful of the more self-conscious underground strips Kurtzman inspired a decade and a half later. Need I add that "The Katchandhammer Kids" is sidesplitting, rollicking fun?

Kurtzman took the step from anarchy to surrealism, with a dose of American Gothic thrown in for good measure, in MAD #15's "Gasoline Valley". A goof on the continuity destroying time-lapses so prevalent in serial-

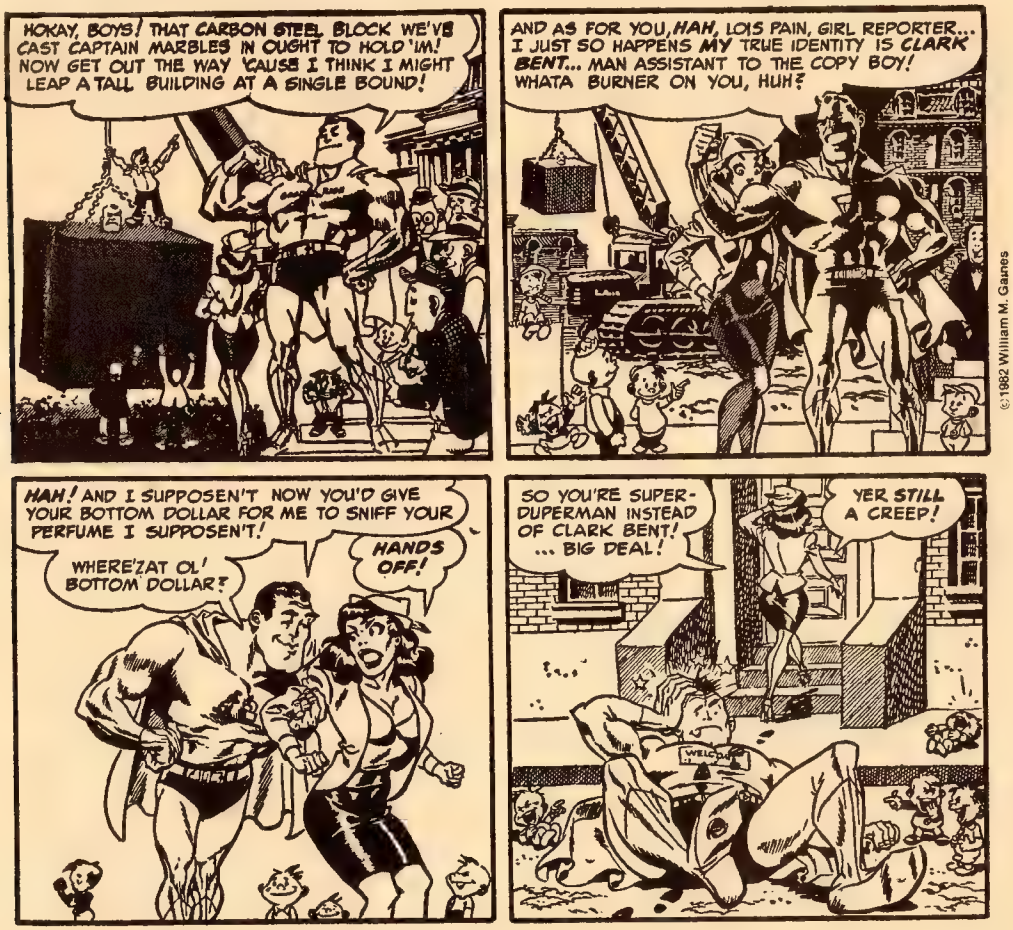
ICH HORT GEPUTTEN ON MEIN BESTEN UNIFORM FUR DAS REASON! AT LONGEN LAST, ICH HORT GEGOTTEN EIN OFFER ZU KOMMANDING EIN BOAT! ICH HORT GEWAITING YEARS FUR DAS OPPORTUNITY! DER BOAT KOMPANY IST GESENDING EIN MANN OVER TODAY FUR INTERVIEWEN ME UND ICH GOT ZU MACHEN EIN GUTEN IMPRESSION!
SH! ...WAS IST DAS NOISE?
SKRITCH
EAST ZONE
WEST ZONE
...DAS IST DER LASTEN OPPORTUNITY ICH VILT EVER HABEN ZU BE EIN REAL KAPITAN! ICH GOT ZU MACHEN EIN GUTEN IMPRESSION!
AHA! ICH HORT GE-THOUGHT ICH HORT GEHEARD A NOISE IN DEM CLOSET!
...DER KINNDER MACHEN MON-KEY BUSINESS! STEPPEN ZIE ASIDE UND ICH OPENEN DER DOOR!
DUN'T FORGET! NO PUTTING CHIKEN FET ON DER STER RALES MAMA.
©1982 William M. Gaines
RROWR
RRIP!
WOOF
POP!
KLOP
GO GO GO!
BALUMP
BALUMP
NOK NOK
ER... EXCUSEN MEIR, MEIN HERR, UBER ICH AM GESEARCHING FUR DER KAPITAN?... ER... ICH HORT GEWONDERED IF DU KANST DIRECTEN MEIR ZU EIM!
ICH BIST DER KAPITAN!
...YOUCH?
...ICH!
...YOUCH?
...ICH!
...ECH!
GR
WOO GE-SHTOLE DER DING DONG ?? MAMA
FIER

Kurtzman and Elder's tribute to Goldberg and Lenin.

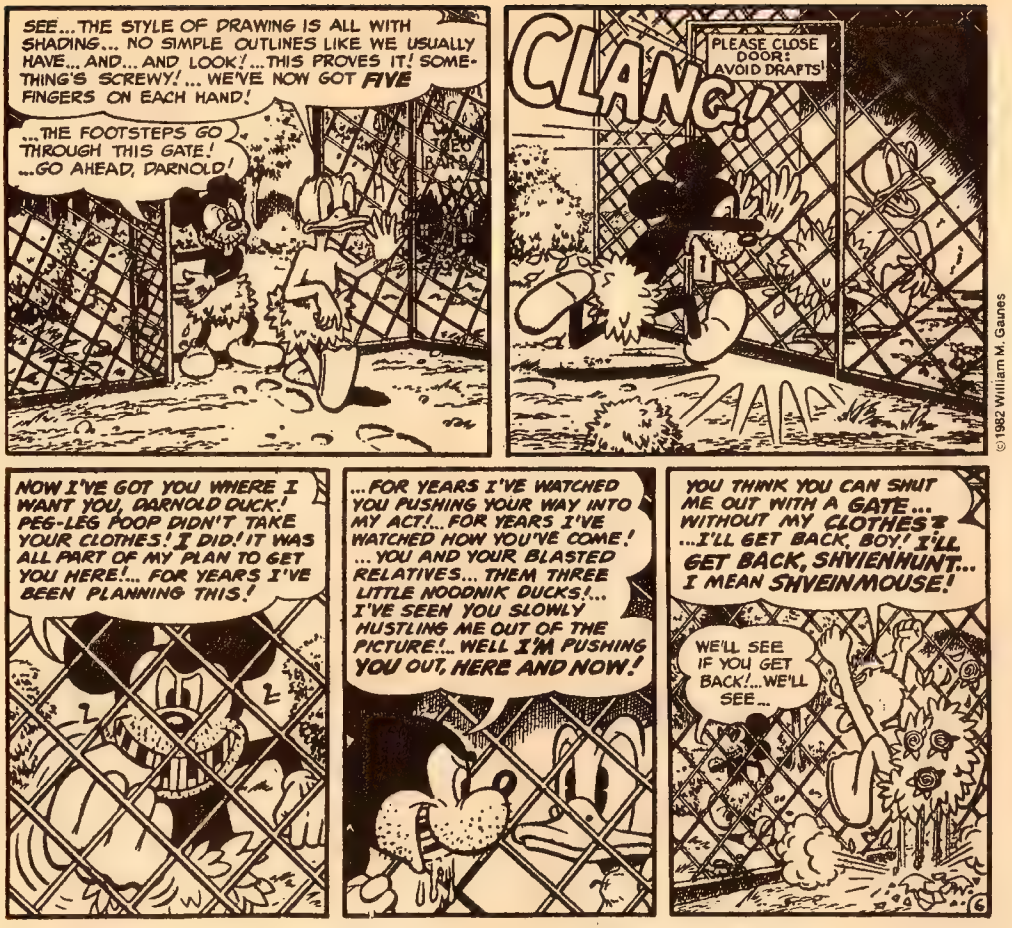
format comics, Kurtzman ages Wilt, Skizziks and their smalltown family and friends entire lifetimes (and back again) in the length of an eight-page strip. The newly-married Skizziks starts a small business one morning, returns home in the afternoon to discover he's the father of a four-year-old, then goes back to work that evening to find that his small shop has grown to cover several acres of buildings, with branches in Dearborn and Detroit. Hilarious? Yes. Surreal? You bet. Strangely authentic to anyone who's ever felt they've made a wrong turn onto another planet when driving through the midwest? Disturbingly so.

During his reign on MAD, Kurtzman attempted some ambitious formal experiments. MAD #11's "Murder the Husband—Murder the Story", drawn by Jack Davis, takes a typical EC suspenstory, plays it straight, then reprints it panel for panel with all of the captions changed. A bachelor's attempt to kill the husband of a woman he loves becomes the same man's attempt to kill the owner of a rowboat he loves. In the original story the killer, who can't swim, dies shrieking when the boat he has murdered the husband in sinks in the middle of a lake. In the MAD version, the killer shrieks because the water is colder than he expected. Overall, the effect of this satire is a lot like watching TV with the sound off and the radio on, and while the presentation is quite silly, the whole experiment provides an interesting study of the relationship of form to content. Besides that, it is a pretty scabrous indictment of the formulaic narratives used in the non-Kurtzman EC books (when it came to biting hands that fed him, Kurtzman rarely hesitated to take a nip out of Bill Gaines' pinkies).

With Wally Wood in MAD #20's "Sound Effects!", Kurtzman tells a murder mystery with nothing but pictures and sound effects.


HOKAY, BOYS! THAT CARBON STEEL BLOCK WE'VE CAST CAPTAIN MARBLES IN OUGHT TO HOLD 'IM! NOW GET OUT THE WAY 'CAUSE I THINK I MIGHT LEAP A TALL BUILDING AT A SINGLE BOUND!
AND AS FOR YOU, HAH, LOIS PAIN, GIRL REPORTER... I JUST SO HAPPENS MY TRUE IDENTITY IS CLARK BENT... MAN ASSISTANT TO THE COPY BOY! WHATA BURNER ON YOU, HUH?
©1982 William M. Gaines
HAH! AND I SUPPOSEN'T NOW YOU'D GIVE YOUR BOTTOM DOLLAR FOR ME TO SNIFF YOUR PERFUME I SUPPOSEN'T!
WHERE'ZAT OL' BOTTOM DOLLAR?
HANDS OFF!
SO YOU'RE SUPER-DUPERMAN INSTEAD OF CLARK BENT! ... BIG DEAL!
YER STILL A CREEP!

Whether as Clark Bent or Superduperman, the Man of Steel can't surmount Lois Pain's abuse and disdain.


SEE... THE STYLE OF DRAWING IS ALL WITH SHADING... NO SIMPLE OUTLINES LIKE WE USUALLY HAVE... AND... AND LOOK!... THIS PROVES IT! SOMETHING'S SCREWY!... WE'VE NOW GOT FIVE FINGERS ON EACH HAND!
...THE FOOTSTEPS GO THROUGH THIS GATE! ...GO AHEAD, DARNOLD!
CLANG!
PLEASE CLOSE DOOR: AVOID DRAFTS!
NOW I'VE GOT YOU WHERE I WANT YOU, DARNOLD DUCK! PEG-LEG POOP DIDN'T TAKE YOUR CLOTHES! I DID! IT WAS ALL PART OF MY PLAN TO GET YOU HERE!... FOR YEARS I'VE BEEN PLANNING THIS!
...FOR YEARS I'VE WATCHED YOU PUSHING YOUR WAY INTO MY ACT!... FOR YEARS I'VE WATCHED HOW YOU'VE COME! ...YOU AND YOUR BLASTED RELATIVES... THEM THREE LITTLE NOODNIK DUCKS!... I'VE SEEN YOU SLOWLY HUSTLING ME OUT OF THE PICTURE!... WELL I'M PUSHING YOU OUT, HERE AND NOW!
YOU THINK YOU CAN SHUT ME OUT WITH A GATE... WITHOUT MY CLOTHES? ...I'LL GET BACK, BOY! I'LL GET BACK, SHVIENHUNT... I MEAN SHVEINMOUSE!
WE'LL SEE IF YOU GET BACK!...WE'LL SEE...
© 1982 William M. Gaines

Mickey displays a jealousy so realistic that it's tantamount to anarchy in Disneyland.

Kurtzman's cinematic panel construction reaches its apotheosis here, as practically every panel leads visually into the next one. Inter-panel continuity is enhanced by overlapping and repetitive lettering of the sound effects. The final result is a story with a rhythm more similar to that of a film than a comic, the closest thing I've ever seen to the illusion of motion on the static, printed page. An astonishing achievement.

The original MAD is no longer with us. The version Gaines and Feldstein have been pedalling for the last twenty-five years, successful and funny as it has often been, has never been more than a calculated, formularized doppelganger of the manic, exuberant Kurtzman issues. Strangely enough, MAD has prospered under a heavy reliance on film, television and advertising satires, all areas Kurtzman pioneered, but has failed to develop the comic satires that were Kurtzman's pride and joy. Apparently, it takes someone with an extraordinary love and understanding of the graphic story medium to pull such things off successfully, and MAD's second editorial regime seems wise enough to understand that people like Harvey Kurtzman are very difficult to replace.

Of course, the themes and techniques of Kurtzman's comic satires carried over into his other MAD work. His mastery of the visual one-liner (set up the joke in the left panel and pay it off on the right) was a deliciously effective weapon that could devastate any target it was aimed at. The whole of any issue of MAD comics holds up under, and often demands, repeated readings. Yet any eight-year-old can enjoy a MAD comic as much as any grad student savoring its complex subtleties. Perhaps this is why the comic strip satires suited Kurtzman's MAD so well, for comics are works of art produced primarily for children, yet capable of being enjoyed by anyone able to appreciate the talent and imagination that goes into their creation. And when you think about it, that's pretty funny.

TALES CALCULATED TO DRIVE YOU

MAD

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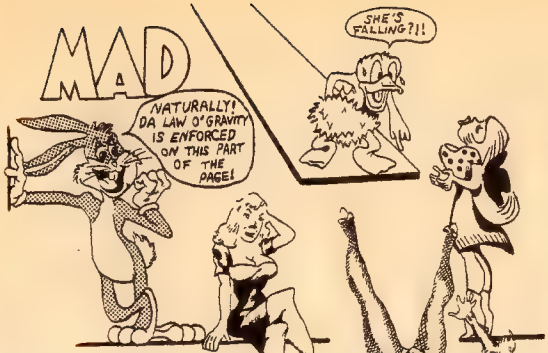

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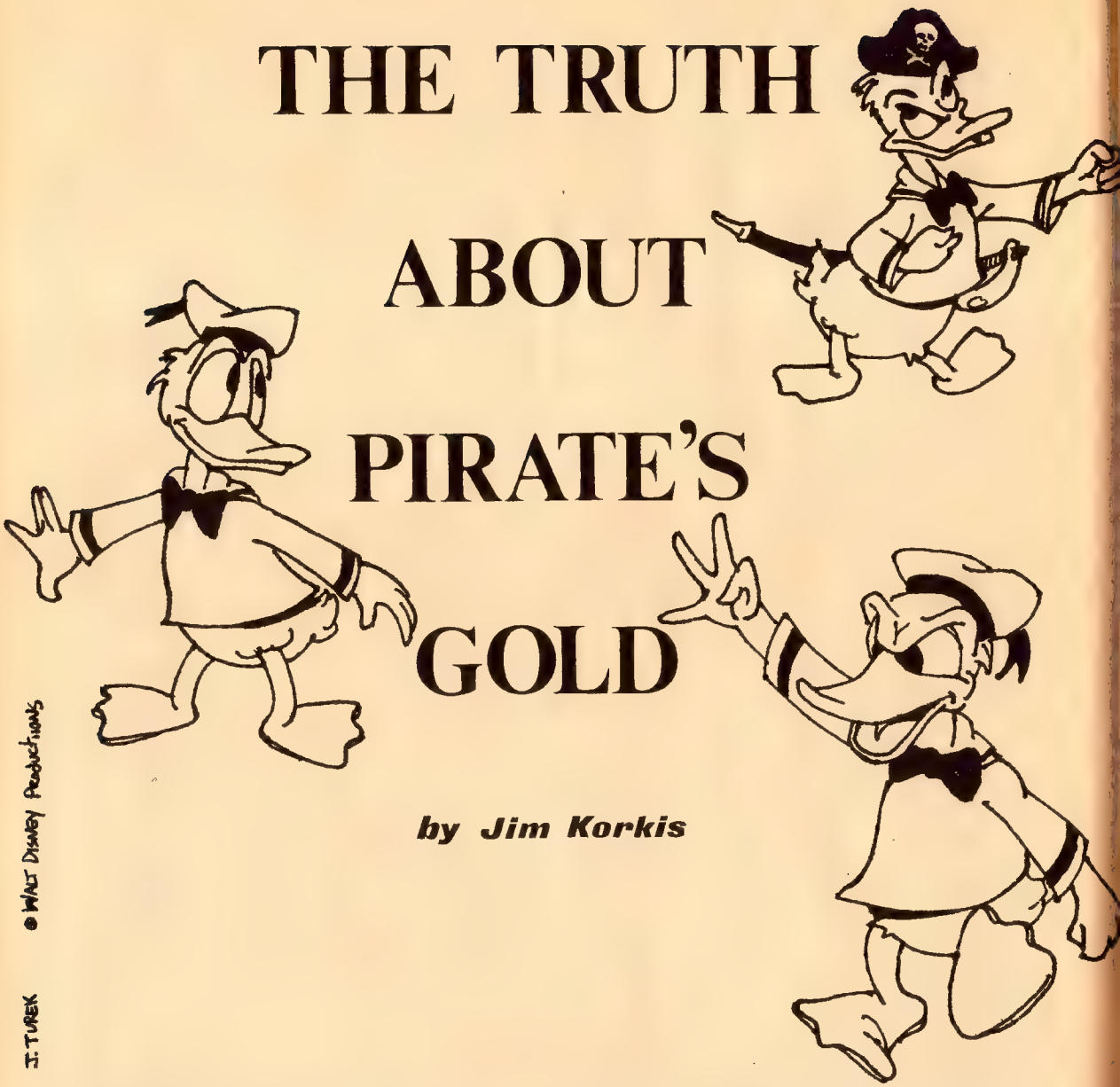
cover-advertisements
1-Mad Mumblings
8-Poopeye! Bill Elder
6-Slow Motion! Jack Davis
5-Comic Book Ads! Bill Elder
6-Under the Waterfront! Wally Wood
1-Christmas & New Year greetings (text)

MAD #22 April 1955
cover-Bill Elder (Special Art Issue)
1-introduction & photo (Bill Elder)
3-The Child! Bill Elder
1-Mad Reader ad #1 (text)
4-The Boy! Bill Elder
5-The Young Artist! Bill Elder
1-Mad Mumblings
6-The Commercial Artist! Bill Elder
7-The Old Pro'! (reprint of Mole!:Mad #2)
1-Senility! Bill Elder

MAD #23 May 1955
1-very very important announcement announcement
6-Gopo Gossum! Walt Wood
1-Mad Mumblings
9-Scenes We'd Like to See! Jack Davis
3-Ripup's Believe It or Don't! Wally Wood
7-The Barefoot Nocountessa! Jack Davis
1-Mad Reader ad #1 (text)
1-the very important announcement

THE TRUTH ABOUT PIRATE'S GOLD



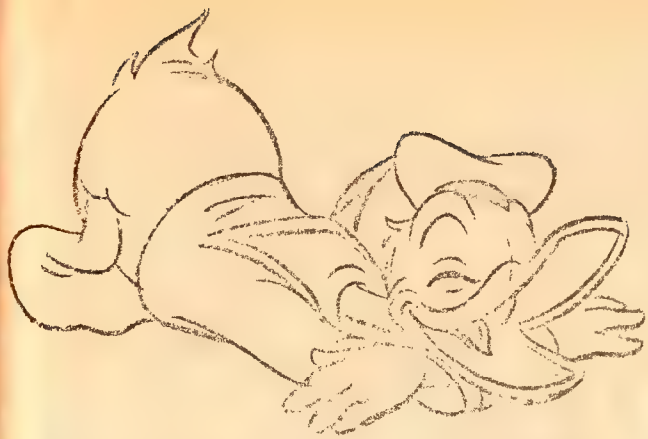
by Jim Korkis

© WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

J. TUREK

In the rush to give Carl Barks recognition for his work on the Duck mythos, it seems that Jack Hannah has been relegated to a historical footnote. Any discussion of Carl Barks' first comic book work on "Donald Duck Finds Pirate's Gold" usually makes note of the fact that Carl Barks only illustrated 32 of the 68 pages while the remaining 36 were done by Jack Hannah in a style almost indistinguishable from Barks.

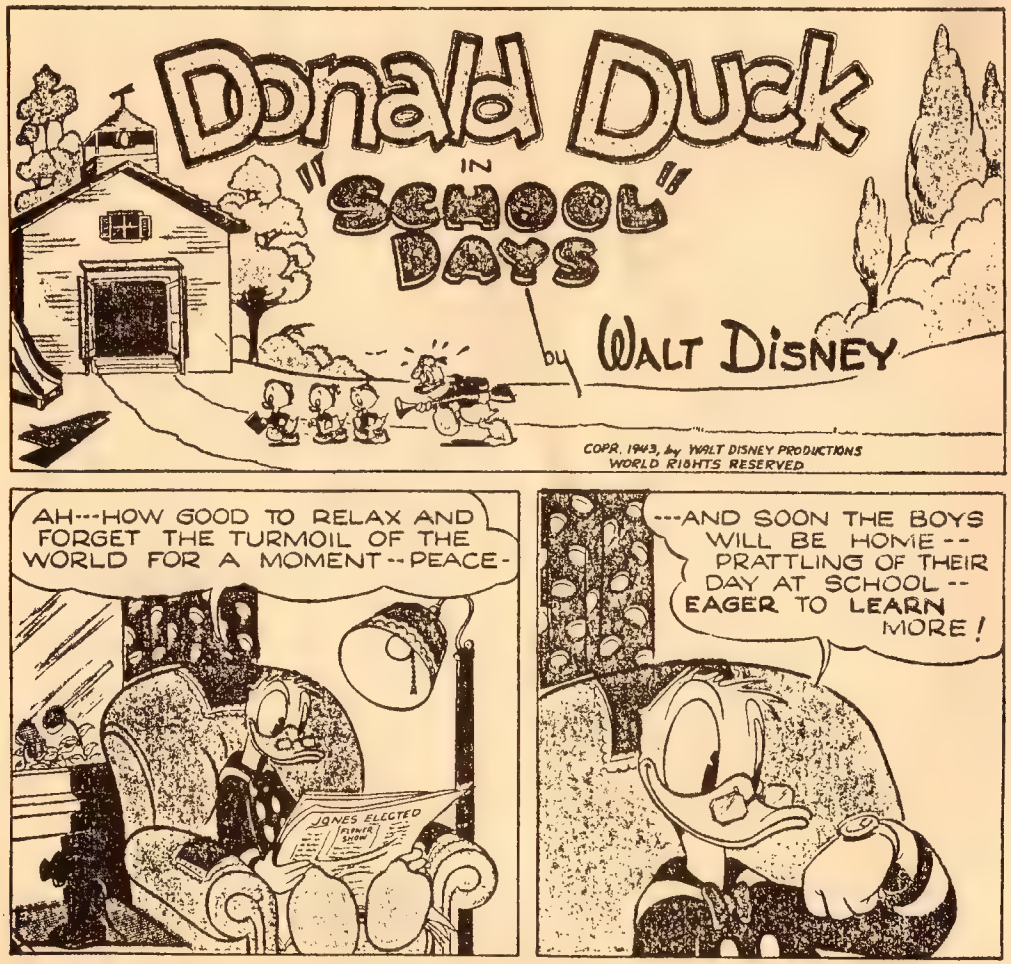
That brief footnote does not even begin to describe the contribution of Jack Hannah to the Duck legend. Hannah started work at the Disney Studios as an animator and some of his first work as a beginning animator appeared in *The Wise Little Hen* (1934) and *The Band Concert* (1935) which were the first two appearances of Donald Duck. By 1939, Hannah was in the story department and teamed with Carl Barks in the "Duck

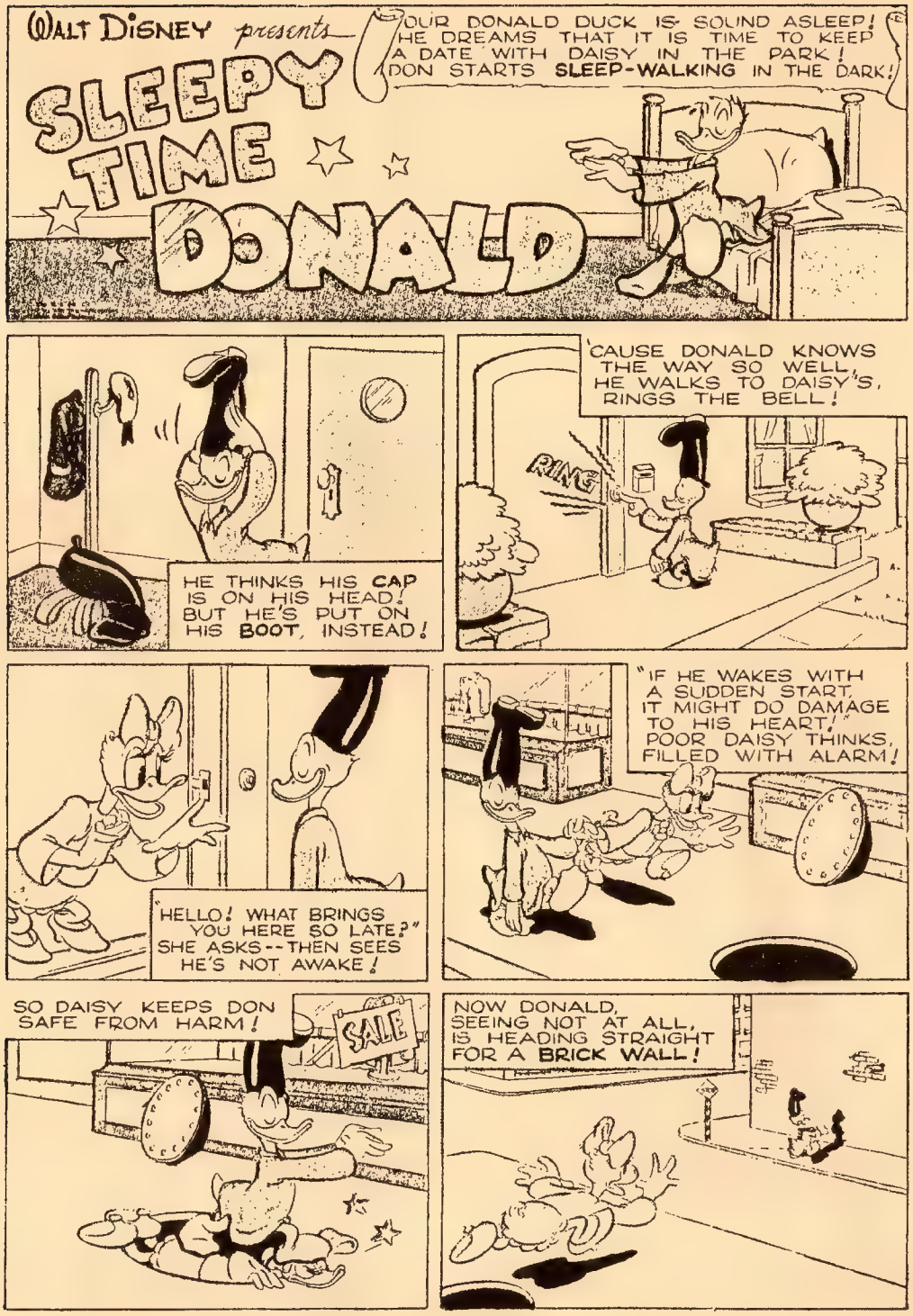


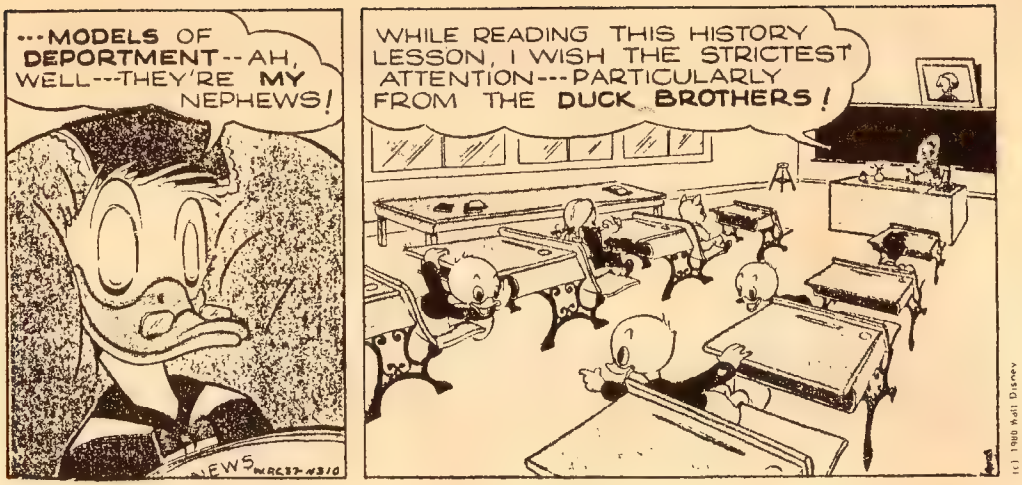
Unit" where they turned out stories of Donald Duck for Jack King's direction. In 1944, Hannah began his career as perhaps the best remembered Donald Duck director when he directed *Donald's Off Day*. After directing well over 100 short cartoons, most of them featuring Donald Duck or Chip'n'Dale, Hannah became one of the first directors on the Disneyland TV show and directed the episodes that featured Walt Disney talking with an animated Donald Duck. Currently, Hannah is in charge of the Character Animation Department at California Institute of the Arts.

More importantly, Hannah's contributions to the character of Donald Duck extended into the four color pages. During my recent interview with Hannah, he expressed surprise that he had "worked on so many comic stories" since he had to squeeze them in after hours at the Studio. Besides *"Pirate's Gold,"* Hannah pencilled and inked three other comic stories: *"Donald Duck in School Days"* (from *WALT DISNEY COMICS AND STORIES #37*); *"Sleepy Time Donald" (WALT DISNEY COMICS AND STORIES #78)* and a 1943 giveaway that had Donald Duck in *"Santa Claus' Visit.*

While attempting to identify his comic work, some confusions arose from the fact that many of


Donald Duck
IN
"SCHOOL" DAYS
by WALT DISNEY
COPR. 1943, by WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS
WORLD RIGHTS RESERVED
AH---HOW GOOD TO RELAX AND FORGET THE TURMOIL OF THE WORLD FOR A MOMENT--PEACE-
JONES ELECTED
PLANTER SHOW
---AND SOON THE BOYS WILL BE HOME--PRATTLING OF THEIR DAY AT SCHOOL--EAGER TO LEARN MORE!
(c) 1980 Walt Disney


WALT DISNEY presents
SLEEPY TIME DONALD
OUR DONALD DUCK IS SOUND ASLEEP! HE DREAMS THAT IT IS TIME TO KEEP A DATE WITH DAISY IN THE PARK! DON STARTS SLEEP-WALKING IN THE DARK!
HE THINKS HIS CAP IS ON HIS HEAD! BUT HE'S PUT ON HIS BOOT, INSTEAD!
'CAUSE DONALD KNOWS THE WAY SO WELL, HE WALKS TO DAISY'S, RINGS THE BELL!
RING
"HELLO! WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE SO LATE?" SHE ASKS--THEN SEES HE'S NOT AWAKE!
"IF HE WAKES WITH A SUDDEN START, IT MIGHT DO DAMAGE TO HIS HEART!" POOR DAISY THINKS, FILLED WITH ALARM!
SO DAISY KEEPS DON SAFE FROM HARM!
SALE
NOW DONALD, SEEING NOT AT ALL, IS HEADING STRAIGHT FOR A BRICK WALL!
(c) 1980 Walt Disney


---MODELS OF DEPORTMENT--AH, WELL---THEY'RE MY NEPHEWS!
WHILE READING THIS HISTORY LESSON, I WISH THE STRICTEST ATTENTION---PARTICULARLY FROM THE DUCK BROTHERS!

the stories that Hannah storyboarded or directed were later turned into comic book stories by other artists including Carl Barks. As an interesting sidenote, one of Hannah's favorite shorts that he directed is *"Trick or Treat"* but he has never seen the Barks' comic version even though he still maintains a close friendship with his former partner.

However, most fans are only aware of Hannah's work on *"Pirate's Gold"* but his version of how that classic developed is different from the accepted version that has been given wide publicity in the fan press.

Supposedly, *"Pirate's Gold"* was to have been a feature cartoon until Walt Disney ordered it shelved. It was developed in the story department by Harry Reeves and Homer Brightman and then adapted into panel form for the comic book by Bob Karp, the gagman on the Donald Duck newspaper strip.

"I don't remember any studio connection with that project at all," recalled Hannah, "Carl and I were working as a story team on the Duck for Jack King and I guess we seemed like the natural choices for the project. They already had a completed script. John Rose asked us up to the office and offered us so much to pencil and ink. I can't recall the exact figure right now. There was never any contact with studio personnel, only with Elinor Packer and John Rose. I never remember the story being developed in the story department because I was in the story department and saw everything that was even being considered at the time. It would have been unusual to say the least for Harry Reeves and Homer Brightman to have worked on that story together. That just wasn't the way projects were developed at that time."

When asked if it were possible that the Duck was being considered for a feature length cartoon, Hannah replied "I never felt that the Duck would work into a feature length picture. I don't think the Duck was strong enough. Also, I think you'd go crazy trying to understand him over a period of time that it takes for a feature length cartoon. It was hard enough to understand him for just five or six minutes."

DELL FOUR COLOR #9 published in 1942 recounted the adventures of Donald and the nephews teaming up with a parrot named Old Yellow Beak to find pirate Henry Morgan's treasure despite the interference of Black Pete. "Carl and I blue pencilled the story first and got it approved before we inked it. We got together to decide on settings like the kitchen but that was about it. After we finished the story, I went to Wisconsin on family business and when I returned two weeks later, Carl had gone over to Whitman full time but I continued to work at the Studio," commented Hannah.

"Looking back on the artwork now, it's sometimes difficult for me to tell on some pages whether it's my work or Carl's," laughed Hannah. (For the record, even though the pages are not numbered, Barks illustrated pages 1, 2, 5, 12-40 and Hannah did the rest.) "Whitman gave Carl and I a couple dozen of those issues. When I think of how I let my kids tear through those issues...!!! Of course, in those days they were only a dime. We thought nothing of it at the time but now I understand it's a rather valuable asset to collectors."

Jack Hannah is more than just a footnote to a Carl Barks history. He is a major contributor to the legend of Donald Duck.

THE CASE OF THE BOGUS AVERY

by Jim Korkis

Tex Avery is one of the few animators whose style is instantly recognizable. His characters twist and contort their bodies. Eyes literally pop out of characters' faces and mouths drop to the floor allowing tongues of indeterminate length to stretch across the ground.

Avery was one of the most influential directors at Warner Brothers and was one of the primary animators responsible for the development of Bugs Bunny. Avery's work at M.G.M. and Walter Lantz Productions provided some of the most memorable animated cartoons produced by those studios.

In recent years, he has been active with a Los Angeles based commercial company appropriately titled Avery-Tirce Productions. This company has been responsible for the animation of the bugs in the Raid commercials as well as the cricket in the Gillette lighter commercials and of course, Avery directed the Frito Bandito before a concerned minority group pressured the character off the air.

The fascination with Avery's work is so strong that an excellent book detailing his career(*Tex Avery: King of Cartoons* by Joe Adamson) was published in 1975. This recent fame resulted in an interesting homage.

Some animated commercials are only produced for a local area simply because the advertised product may only be available in a limited area. It is not unusual for radio stations to advertise especially in the highly competitive L.A. area. Radio Station 10Q(1020 on your A.M. radio dial in the L.A. area) is a "soft rock" station and in the early weeks of 1978, it flooded the local stations with an intriguing animated commercial.

The commercial opens with an *American Graffiti* style waitress who looks strikingly like the tantalizing female characters Preston Blair used to animate so fantastically for Tex Avery's M.G.M. cartoons. She is outside the type of drive-in restaurant popular during the Fifties, and her customers are all wolves sitting behind the wheels of Fifties automobiles. Now the relationship with Avery's work becomes more pronounced. In very limited animation, the wolves mimic the exaggerated antic of the Avery wolf characters featured in *Red Hot Riding Hood*(1949) and especially *Little Rural Riding Hood*(1949). The gags are remarkable duplications of Avery's: hands shoot through a mouth and end up sticking out the wolf's ears; a wolf's body splits into pieces and miraculously reforms itself; and a head squeezes through a car's radio antenna. Several other such exaggerations occur before the commercial ends.

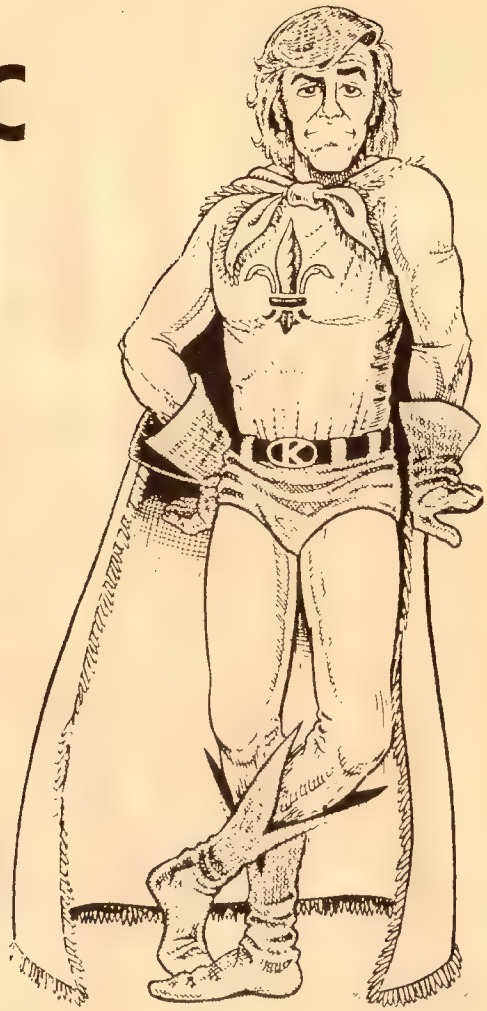
A full page advertisement featuring a scene from the commercial appeared in the L.A. Times Calendar Section April 16, 1978. The commercial hasn't been seen on TV since May 1978.

Contacted by phone on April 25, 1978, Tex Avery laughed, "You're a smart kid that you know that those are my characters. But, no, I didn't do that sloppy commercial, and M.G.M. is so big that they wouldn't sue a local place like that." It is probably more likely that M.G.M. was totally unaware that their characters were appearing in a local commercial. Avery went on to describe the commercial as "crude" and did not wish to recieve any credit for it.

Contacting the radio station proved to be of little value. The employees had no idea how the commercial was developed and the public relations person could only vaguely remember that the film might have been made by a firm called Star Films. The station had no address or phone number listed for the company and Directory Assistance was equally unhelpful. The search ended.

Who was "Star Films"? A group of young guys working for an independent company who decided to pay homage to an outstanding animator? Or was it a cynical animator who felt his stolen material would go undetected? What was the real story behind the commercial's development? Sadly, like most of the true mysteries of the world, The Case of the Bogus Avery may forever be labeled "unsolved".

CAPTAIN KENTUCKY: THE COMIC IS PUT BACK INTO COMIC STRIPS

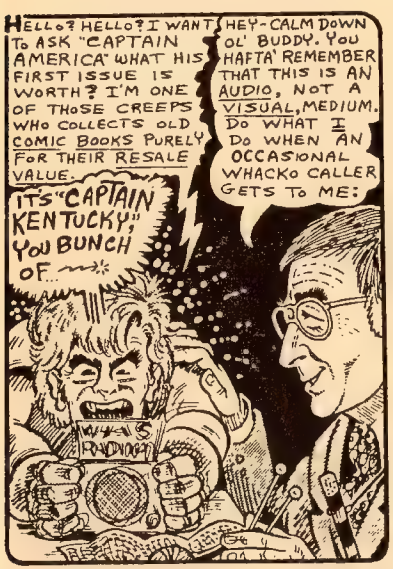


What was it about comics that originally captivated us as youngsters? Was it the weird-looking heroes and garish illustrations, or was it something else? Wasn't it the *invention* that our supple minds found so intriguing and the imaginative content that we couldn't find elsewhere at the time? Before we understood what satire was, or whether the stories had meaningful intent, all we cared about was that we wanted to be entertained by something that was different. Looking back on what we liked as a child, doesn't the stuff which bares up over the years show that the people doing it were clearly captivated by their work, and didn't treat it as just another job? When artists today are forced to do three and four pages a day while writers must do a hundred to two hundred pages a month, how is it possible for them to say they bring this kind of affection and perfection to their work? When the companies keep the level of payment down to where the professionals are forced to toil in this way, you can't expect the work to be very special very often. A few people have taken note of that and have brought their concentration to bear in one area and tried to do something different within those recognized parameters. Frank Miller's

Daredevil and John Byrne's *Fantastic Four* are successful examples of this. These comics are *fun* to read because that extra care has been expended to try and complete the task differently, rather than merely trying to complete it speedily.

This is the feel which exudes from every jam, crammed full panel of Don Rosa's "Captain Kentucky." What Don has been doing with increasing skill in the RBCC from 1975-1979, he has turned to in the form of a weekly strip in Louisville's Saturday magazine, *Scene*. Although in Sunday-page format, you'd have to call it a "Saturday-page," plus it's published in black and white.

What makes this strip different, even though it's a super-hero strip, is not the satire in itself but


HELLO? HELLO? I WANT TO ASK "CAPTAIN AMERICA" WHAT HIS FIRST ISSUE IS WORTH? I'M ONE OF THOSE CREEPS WHO COLLECTS OLD COMIC BOOKS PURELY FOR THEIR RESALE VALUE.
HEY-CALM DOWN OL' BUDDY. YOU HAFTA' REMEMBER THAT THIS IS AN AUDIO, NOT A VISUAL, MEDIUM. DO WHAT I DO WHEN AN OCCASIONAL WHACKO CALLER GETS TO ME:
IT'S "CAPTAIN KENTUCKY," YOU BUNCH OF...

THOSE TWO BIZARRE GARGANTUAN CREATURES... THEY TORE J. FRED INTO LITTLE BITS AND PIECES... AND NOW THEY'RE FADING BACK INTO THE CLOUDS!
LISTEN! THAT VOICE AGAIN!

DEAR OLD UNCLE ED?
EPILOGUE: ANY OF YOU WHO DID NOT GROW UP IN LOUISVILLE DURING THE 1950's AND CAN'T MAKE SENSE OUTTA THIS COMIC STRIP--TOUGH!!! A NEW STORY!

the fact that it's completely regional. Characters and gags are aimed at the resident of Louisville who would recognize real people who appear in these panels while we only spot those who gained notoriety *before* they settled in Louisville (i.e. Roger Davis and Victor Jory). The others are a crazy-quilt of personalities that every major city is afflicted with in the form of news persons and radio interviewers. Even the episode dealing with a defunct children's show must have its analog in the heart of most every fan somewhere or another. The local kiddie-show host from my own youth is now visible in national television commercials. All of them, like Chuckles The Clown (Of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* fame), go on to their rewards in one fashion or another.

The artwork, although in Don Rosa's own individual style, hearkens back to the Will Elder of *Mad* comics in that the panels tend to be extraordinarily "busy." Even in the first installment where he's feeding rats while interviewing sewer workers.

Although newspaper strips (with the singular exception of *Doonesbury*) tend toward blandness and avoid saying or doing anything even *remotely* off-color, Don Rosa pulls off some oddball little bits from time to time such as episode 12's "Tastelessness-of-the-month" award and the symbolic gesture in episode eleven when the kidnappers of the paper's editor send a box containing half of the man's moustache. The latter is a pretty mild little joke, right? Well, there were readers who were actually *offended* by that.

One of Captain Kentuck's most endearing qualities is that he's a klutz, and where other strips would let this quality linger on ridiculously and without comment, by episode 14 of this series a group of insurance underwriters endeavor to put Captain Kentucky out of circulation to stop his gradual destruction of the city (which in a couple episodes seemed considerably more than just "gradual"). This opens the way for even more destruction in the fine tradition Don Rosa made popular in the RBCC.

Captain Kentucky is almost a sequel to Don's long running series in the RBCC because the secret identity of the good Captain is none other than Lance Pertwillaby. This is the only character he has based the strip around, although Feather Fluff does make a brief appearance. I always liked Professor Smyte, myself, but one has to consider what Louisville's German population would make of him. Perhaps he could do a story about Louisville's own homegrown Nazi war criminal?

This volume contains the first fifty installments of Captain Kentucky (although two are double-page spreads), and as soon as enough copies sell of this edition, a second volume can be rushed into print. Don has already completed the one-hundreth weekly episode as the strip has existed for over two years.

While writing about a character whose activities take place in locales recognizeable to any Louisville resident, Don doesn't miss an opportunity to comment on these locales and personalities. In an episode when the Mayor of Louisville disappears, Lance Pertwillaby decides that the best thing he can do for the city is to ignore the disappearance. On the later strips, he includes what he calls "C.K.'s Predecoded Secret Message" in which he comments openly on a certain local TV station which butchers movies, as well as on the ineptness of one cable TV firm and even on how obnoxious he feels Jerry Lewis is. In the editorial in this volume he explains that sometimes these didn't make it past the editor, but those have been restored for the collection.

On thing this strip does which many comic strips seldom take advantage of is the use of facial expressions in greater variety than one finds in the average Marvel comic. In episode 41 the good Captain is finally interviewed on the radio only to be mistaken for a horde of similarly named characters and C.K.'s face undergoes changes from amazement, annoyance to outright wild-eyed hostility until the talk show host joins giving raspberries to the listeners. This strip also contained one of the most off-color references thus far which caused some readers to write in calling the strip "disgraceful trash." The gag questioned what Mr. Greenjeans does with all those animals in the barn when Capt. Kangaroo isn't around.

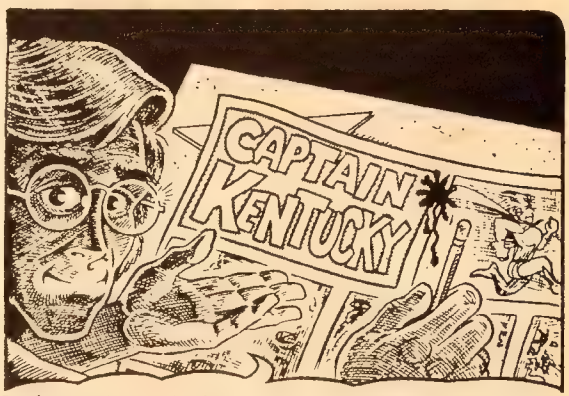
Although I've concentrated on the more esoteric elements of the strip, be assured that it's as wild as anything Don has ever done for the *RBCC*, and action fans will not be disappointed. Don's love of comics shines through this strip time and again with his carefully rendered panels and his imaginative use of sound-effects, even to using the word "zip" which appears on most zipatone sheets.

Humor has become very popular in fandom in the past few years, but Don Rosa's strips have always managed to find more interesting uses of his humorous talents. Fred Hembeck's strips are a lot of fun, but trying to mine humor from what's being done in comic books can be self-limiting, in the long run. As much as I enjoy Fred's cartoons, he seems to be running dry as evidenced by his recent TBG strip where he murdered his wife...(but it was all in fun!) in the course of a commentary on Little Lulu. Fred has carved out a niche for himself, but his incredible output has succeeded in mining that vein for all it's worth. Where does he go now?

Captain Kentucky would *seem* to be even more limited in conception, but Don manages to show that the city has a story of some weird sort for every individual who lives there, *especially* those in the public eye.

At one page a week it can reasonably be argued that *of course* this strip is going to have advantages over the professional who needs to make his living from volume of output. Whatever the reasons for the quality, it's a joy to read something which is fun and has no pretensions. Don has mastered the knack of telling a very satisfying story in sometimes as few as eight panels, and even the continued adventures are only four to six installments long. Stories generally depend on image and dialogue and move along briskly. Captions are rare (except in the origin recap episode), and usually consist of a couple words or a pithy sentence when they are used. Compared to Marvel's zany over use of wordy captions, it's a breath of fresh air.

Dwight Decker, writing in *The Comics Journal #67*, expressed regret that Don's talents are confined to a strip of only local interest. I agree, as Don certainly has the talent to do for the world what he has already done for Louisville. He may be forced to expand his domain just because there may not be enough of Louisville left standing much longer (36 places and things were destroyed just in the first 50 episodes). With two years of "Captain Kentucky" already in existence, it's about time it was seen by more readers. Maybe if we all wrote in to *Real People*...



Volume One of The Captain Kentucky Collection is available for $2.00 plus $1.00 postage from Don Rosa, 1752 Chichester Avenue #1, Louisville, KY. 40205

----JVH

CRITIQUE

10. Superb
9. Excellent
8. Very Good
7. Good
6. Fairly Good
5. Fair
4. Tolerable
3. Poor
2. Very Poor
1. Worthless

Critique is basically a review column, but we won't specifically recommend that you buy or not buy a particular item. We will review each item to the best of our ability and let each reader take it from there. We will be reviewing almost any item (fanzines, prozines, records, portfolios, tapes, posters, etc.) with one exception. We will not be reviewing any NMI publications for obvious reasons. *Critique* offers an audience of over 3,000 people. We also offer the publisher of any item we review up to 200 words of free space to rebut his review, if he chooses, providing his review received less than an "8" rating. All rebuttals to appear in the next column must be in our hands at least a month before the publication of that issue. If you have an item you would like reviewed, send a copy to: James Van Hise, 10885 Angola Road, San Diego, CA 92126.

A few things to remember: Where undergrounds are concerned, you must be 18 or older to order them. All fanzines reviewed are 8½ x 11 with offset printing and wraparound binding unless noted otherwise. From time to time there may be a publication over which two of our reviewers have wide disagreement, and in which case two reviews of the same book will be run in the interest of fairness.

A final note. The only reason for *Critique* is as a service to fandom. If you appreciate what we are trying to do, then let us know. Your support can be expressed in numerous ways. If you order an item because of our review, then please mention *Critique* in your order, and of course the RBCC would appreciate your subscription support.

Naturally, your comments are welcomed.

JAMES VAN HISE / EDITOR

COMMIES FROM MARS #3
$1.50—32 pages—Published by Last Gasp Eco-Funnies, P.O. Box 212, Berkeley, CA 94705.

This unassuming underground has enough simple virtues to compensate for the incoherent weakness of its theme and some occassional artistic incompetence. The book's one true masterpiece, Ian James and John Rich's "Prayers From a Closet," a thoroughly conceptualized examination of personal divinity and other delusions, counterbalances the other serious strip, a muddled and ugly orgy of violence by Peter Kuper called "Shiver and Twitch." Michael Leonard's "Rogue Comet" fails as a parable, suffering from predictability complicated by a case of the cutes.

The humor strips fare pretty well, Revilo's standing head and shoulders above the rest of the pack. Shawn Kerri, Ripp and S. Clay Wilson tie for least humorous contribution. It is in fact Revilo, James and Rich, along with the hyper-talented John Pound who cover painting of a Martian assimilated to life on the Venice boardwalk is worth the price of the book alone, who take *COMMIES FROM MARS* above the level of most current undergrounds, although editor Tim Boxell and the ever irreverent Greg Irons manage a few slick turns on the interesting premise that, whether it comes from Mars or Russia, Americans feel fundamentally threatened by anything they don't understand. Not quite up to the absurd level of paranoia reached by the similar *INSECT FEAR* some years ago, but definitely on the right track.

RATING: 7 —*ROBERT STRAUSS*

THE ADVENTURESS #9
$1.00—36 pages (6" x 9½")—Available from Steven R. Johnson, The Comics Heroines Fan Club, P.O. Box 1329, Campbell, CA 95008.

Brent Anderson's excellent cover wraps around a handsome, well-organized little zine devoted to comics and fantasy heroines.

Primary contents are chapters from three conti-

Primary contents are chapters from three continuing original stories: "Ixiona" by Nick Chinn, about lady centaurs in the twentieth century, Gerald Perkins' "The Visitor," a Burroughs pastiche set in an alternative Africa, and Scott Gibson's super-heroine intrigue "Reign of the Sphinx." All are written in a pulpy style superior to that of most fan fiction, and are clever enough to hold one's interest despite a tendency to stereotype characters and indulge some decidedly immature fantasies.

A nice "Gale Allen" strip is reprinted from a

1945 *PLANET COMICS* (who was this Fran Hopper? She sure could draw), and Steve Swensen and Al Gordon's 3-page original strip, "The Conjuring," is no chore to look at, either. The literary content of either strip, if there is any, is best left unexplored.

This book seems to be part of an overall series, and it succeeds well at its modest attempts to celebrate the heroine, doing it with humor, style, and for the most part, some degree of taste.

RATING: 7 —*ROBERT STRAUSS*

OVERLOAD #4
$1.75—48 pages & 8 page, 8½ x 5½ insert—Published by Don CHin, 1951 Quaker St., Eureka, Cal. 95501. Add 75¢ for postage.
WILDCAT #78
$3.50 for 4 issues—48 pages, 7¼ x 10½—Published by Wildcat, 415 W. Brady, Tulsa, OK 74103.
THE LOOKING GLASS #119
40¢—18 pages, 7½ x 10, & 4 page newsletter—Available from Ben Fulve, 25 Parkway, Montclair, NJ 07042.
HOLIER THAN THOU #8
$1.00—52 pages—Published by Marty Cantor, 5263 Riverton Ave., Apt. #1, North Hollywood, Cal. 91601.

In certain aspects, the urge to publish is as strong, if not stronger, than the urge to mate. This can result, as in the case of *OVERLOAD*, in a mutedly colored Steve Fabian shell to protect the immature comic strips and John Pound interview inside. Another interesting characteristic is *OVERLOAD*'s highly developed symbiotic relationship with its environment, exemplified by the many ads it contains for pizza parlors, print shops and other small businesses indigenous to its Eureka, California habitat.

Most members of the genus, Fandus Verbosus, however eschew attractive coloration, offset printing and good paper in favor of the more functional black and white, mimeograph and newsprint, and the debate among researchers as to whether this occurs out of necessity for survival or is simply evidence of retarded evolutionary development continues to this day.

HOLIER THAN THOU expresses its individuality through debates over the morality of parking one car in two spaces and the relative propriety of concentration camp jokes. *THE LOOKING GLASS* is easily identified by its eclectic use of bad spelling and the courage to publish an unintentionally hilarious article on sf fandom in Poland. *OVERLOAD* displays a kind of territorialism markedly different from that of *OVERLOAD*'s, one that assumes that other sf fans will be interested in ethnographic studies of Ozark hillbilly life and articles about local train wreck competitions.

What all publications of this class have in common is their amateurism, and the developmental relationship between inept storytelling, illegible art, pointless reviews and barely literate writing becomes apparent to any observer exposed to a few examples. However, despite all laws of good taste, natural selection and poetic justice, historical evidence seems to indsure that these creatures will continue to thrive.

RATINGS:
OVERLOAD: 5
OTHERS: 4 —*ROBERT STRAUSS*

MANDRAGORA: A Portfolio by Tim Hammell —$10.00 + $2.00 postage—Published by Tim Hammell, 205-1330 Harwood Street, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6E 1S7.

Tim Hammell is a semi-regular contributor to the RBCC, most notably having done three illos in #150.

This is his first portfolio and I don't mind saying that the work here is so good, that it is superior to anything he has done for the RBCC. There is a lot of imagination and craft presented here, the kind an artist does when he is striving to please himself more than anyone else.

The portfolio is 10" x 13 " in a beige card folder. There are five plates printed in chocolate ink on desert sand' parchment. It is limited to 500 signed and numbered copies.

The illustrations are very interesting and are difficult to describe adequately so as to convey the level of imagination and expertise presented. One is of a strange merman creature swimming in a shadowy deep and reaching out to touch a swirling globe clutched in a three-toed reptilian hand. A

very moody piece. Another portrays a humanoid alien in the midst of an unusual stormy setting which may be between dimensions as he gazes upon a woman's statuesque face which is surrounded by small globes and teardrops of liquid. It is surreal yet captivating. Another is of an almost metallic looking figure with trails of sparkling stars tapering off his back, while the others portray two nude males; one in a garden scene where he is posed a la Michelangelo's David in front of the statue of a dolphin, while the last shows a man in a barbaric tent setting and one feels that he is perhaps a wizard, albeit an unhuman one.

This is a very fine portfolio and although there may be others by more well-known artists, few of them are as good or as captivating as this one. It would be a shame to pass this by merely because Tim is not a big name artist in fandom.

RATING 10—JAMES VAN HISE

FAN WORLD #4,
80 ; subs $6.00/year 3rd class, $6.75/year first class - 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 - 20 pages - Published every three weeks by Sunset Publishing Gang, 9012 Evergreen drive, Mentor, Ohio 44060

FAN WORLD is designed to be a general comics newszine covering the major underground and fan publishing areas of comics fandom. Other than the various news features covering the various new releases by the various publishers there is very little material to merit reader interest.

The 'My Recommendation' column isn't very well done as it really provides only a list of where to get zines, ones thought to have merit by the writers of the column. They give no reasons for what amounts to their opinions. They neglect to give any real information on the books they recommend. This makes the column of little use to those not already familiar with the reviewers.

Seven pages of this small zine are taken up with advertising/want ads. Overall the zine is very unattractive, with blatant typos that should have been corrected before the zine was ever printed. Poor hand lettering is used for titles and headings, when it could have been done a lot better with little expense via transfer letter sheets.

The impression left by all of this was a zine thrown much too hastily together. If these people don't take their zine seriously enough why should anyone bother buying the damn thing. A faanish zine approach is fine and admirable in the right circumstances. A sercon type product such as a newszine shouldn't take on the air of a one draft personal-zine, nor should it take that approach with its news and advertising. I suggest Sunset group look more closely at other newszines to see how one should be done.

Rating 2/ Vernon Clark

HUZZAH #1,
$1.50 - 6½ x 8½ - 48 pages - Published by Three—Hand Graphics, 2352 S. Osage, Wichita, Kansas 67213

HUZZAH is the first comic fanzine by a talented group of fan writer/artists. With such a fine first effort I look for better things in the future from them.

There are a number of comic stories of varying lenghs in Huzzah so I'll only point out some of the zine's better material in my opinion. "Parapheaneous" is eleven pages of humourous strip cartoons by Jeff Kilian. He works in a nice cartoony style with a good feel for humour and satire. The strip is a number of funny gags that revolve around a small group of college students. "Erma Felna" is the first part of a SF story by Steve Gallaci, who works in a very unique style that suits well his SF/Fantasy material. The story itself

deals with the galactic conflict between different humanoid-animal star systems. The story looks very promising and I hope we are able to see its completion.

"Gunship" by Gallaci, is another SF comic story set in a future history of highly developed psychic-powered humans. These people with psi-abilities are used for special purposes in this future war. The story follows the personal conflicts of one psi-soldier and his own internal and external problems with using his abilities against the enemy. The story is well done and achieves a sufficiently fitting climax.

HUZZAH is a good fanzine and should be of interest to any discerning fanzine reader. These guys deserve support as they have the nucleus of talent for some fine future efforts. Try Huzzah and you'll not be disappointed.

Rating 7/Vernon Clark

ALL THE LIES THAT ARE MY LIFE
by Harlan Ellison - Limited Edition $12.00

130 pages—Published by Underwood Miller. There were only 620 copies of this hardcover published but I'm reviewing it anyway even though it is already out-of-print. Check out the specialty shops. It's worth having, believe me.

This is a very special story. It is autobiographical (I recognize *both* of the principal characters when I read the abridged version in F&SF about two weeks before I obtained this) but it is also something more. Harlan looks upon friendship as a great trust, something which is important and

honorable. He may even place it on a level *almost* as high as writing. This story is about both of these things. It is a story about a writer who wants his words to live after his flesh has gone the way of all things. At first it seems to be about something else, as it begins on a tone recognizeable as Harlan's. There are some who might snicker and say that this is just Harlan goofing, indulging himself for all to see, but that's because they've been captured by the seductive texture of the story in which everything seems to be drawn from life, when it isn't. The concept is drawn from life, as are some of the people and events, but the core is a *story* and it exists even if all the trimmings and names are removed. It is the story that moves and uplifts us, and it is the characterizations, the deft movements of the writer's craft, that make the story breathe and cause the memory to linger.

In one of the Afterwards, Norman Spinrad accurately labels this as one of Harlan's very best stories, and one that is quite possibly pivotal in nature, as regards his future work. By sheer coincidence, I visited Harlan at the time he was writing this story, and while I was prowling through his manse snapping murky photos, I could hear his typewriter way at the other end of the house clicking away to a unique musical accompaniment. The time had come to write this story. It had churned around inside him long enough and the gestation period had ended. During my visit I asked him what he had appearing in the near future, and he said not much. As he put it, "I haven't written much in the last year...but I've played a lot of pool. I think I've earned a break though, wouldn't you?" In another writer this attitude would be dangerous. In his Afterward, Robert Sheckley says, "There is something which lives inside you that does not want stories to be written. It is Thanatos, the Death drive. It is infinitely seductive." Harlan may, at times, seem to be avoiding writing as deadlines fall months behind, but this is because he only writes when he feels he is ready. He is not dodging when he says that something will be finished when it is finished. When Harlan decides the story is ready to flow, wonders appear that other writers can only strive for after many rewrites. That's something else not many people realize. Harlan doesn't rewrite. His first draft is his only draft, and that makes the end result that much more amazing.

If any doubt that Harlan's literary reputation is earned, each new story must be silencing the critics just as much as he is astounding his fans who receive even more than they expected. Harlan continues to reveal that his best story is always his next one.

RATING 10 - JAMES VAN HISE

BLAM #1,2,3
Published Quarterly - 75¢ each, 75¢ for the next issue - 20 pages - Published by Tom Durham, Box 263, Prairie Grove, Arkansas, 72753.

BLAM is an anthology comic fanzine featuring the efforts of artist/writers Brent Nighswonger and Tom Durham. In the black and white pages of their zine they present the adventures of their various strip characters, which cover a wide spectrum of possible interest areas.

"Bizar—Queen of the World" is a strip by Nighswonger which appears in BLAM 1-3. "Bizar" is a fantasy adventure strip, at times humorous, with a distinctive pulp flair. It features two male characters as they try to make their way back to civilization from the hidden jungle valley of Bizar. In their three adventures so far they escape from the hidden valley, encounter a secret cult of Aztec sun worshippers and their monster priest, and have a run in with a Mexican gang leader. Nighswonger's art is pretty good and in this feature he does some fine pulp style writing.

The other feature by Nighswonger which appears in BLAM 1-3 is "TV Head" a superhero

strip of a man whose brain is placed inside the sophisticated TV mechanism grafted to his body. Nighswonger's art is good, but the story doesn't hold up very well, especially when compared to the "Bizar" strip.

Tom Durham is represented in BLAM by "Speed" (in ish 1,3) and "Two Fist" (in ish 2,3). "Speed" is a detective/mystery strip dealing with a Sam Slade style hardboiled detective. His first adventure deals with a Blackmail ring and the second one deals with a high society murderer. Both Durhams' art and story improve considerably by the second adventure of Speed and by this story his work approaches some of the better crime books of the 1940's. Tom's other character is the super-hero strip "Two Fist." Two Fist is done in the same artistic technique in both issues, and neither story shows much potential beyond the typical 1940's style super-heroes. Nothing great but not all that bad either.

Both Durham and Nighswonger show problems with creating truly effective dialogue, especially in the strips I pointed out as the weaker of their respective efforts. Each of them, by BLAM's third issue are now doing some really nice fanzine comic work and on the strength of their latest issue I recommend them.

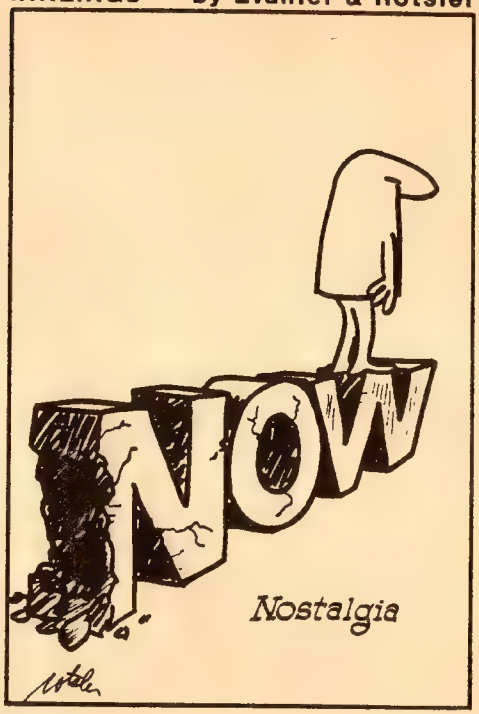
Ratings/ Vernon Clark
BLAM #1 - 6
BLAM #2 - 6
BLAM #3 - 8

CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY
$1.00—Published monthly, subs 12 issues for $10, overseas via airmail 12 issues for $18 payable in U.S. Funds. Published by Everyman Studios, 432 S. Cascade, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80903

While few magazines in fandom devote large space to the underground comix publishers, there are many zines that devote attention to the big corporate publishers. There is only one steady publication which devotes itself completely to the underground field and performs and admirable job. That zine is CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY.

The backbone of CCM are two features. The extended 'News' column, which gives a brief but complete rundown of any and all news on the underground publishers, including update information when new comix releases are due out. This serves as a fine checklist for the UG comix collector. The other steady feature is the lengthy comix review columns by Bill Sherman. He does a very good job at shifting through the sensory overload that awaits the potential UG collector and his reviews can also be of help to the more casual UG reader.

INKLINGS by Evanier & Rotsler



Special long features that fill out this particular issue of CCM are good, indepth and comprehensive interviews with artists Kim Deitch and Rory Hayes, an editorial outlining some future plans for CCM (including a page count increase up to 32 pages), an interesting if all too short article by Jean Mercier on the French comix publishing scene, and a news/gossip column by Bruce Sweeny.

CCM is a very readible and well done zine, of especial interest to people who follow the undergrounds regularly, but also of interest to anyone in fandom. Get a sample copy and judge just how much use you'll be able to make of CCM. I'm sure you will like it.

Vernon Clark/Rating 9

From Everyman Studios (address above)
CALCULUS CAT
25--4-1/4 x 5-1/2 - 8 pages—and—MOON PIE - 25- - 4-1/4 x 5-1/2 - 12 pages.

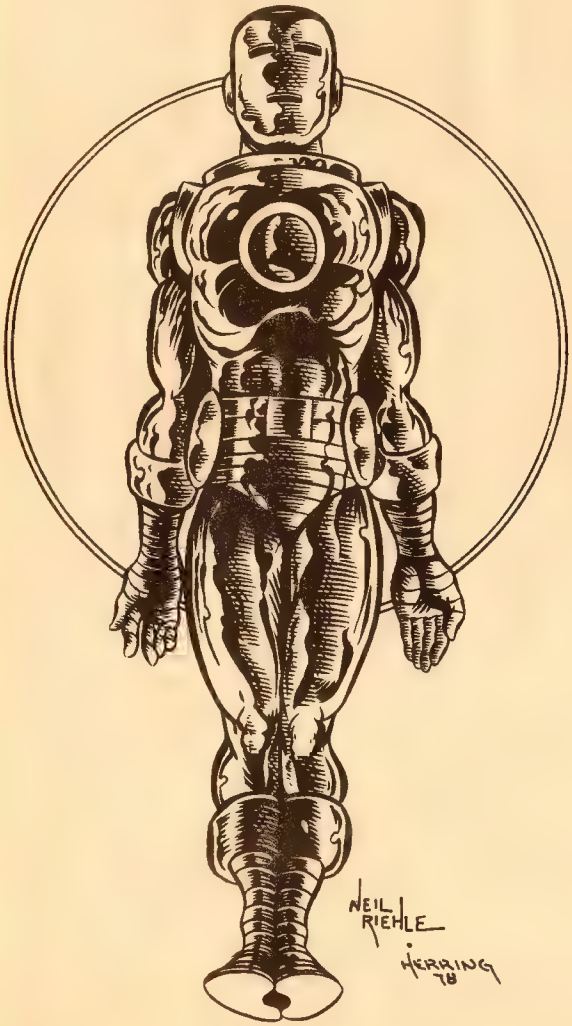
These are two is a series of mini-comix from a variety of artists, published by Everyman Studios. For info on other such material Everyman will send you their catalog upon request.

CALCULUS CAT, but Hunt Emerson, is a very stylized funny animal strip. From an artistic standpoint this little comix looks very good and has some appeal. The writing however is not good,

the comedy shtick doesn't quite work and I was left with the impression of here's some sort of artistic doodle with a story written about it. Emerson's character itself has potential, but as Calculus Cat appears now, it just isn't interesting enough to spend one's money on.

Vernon Clark/Rating 3

MOON PIE is a mini-comix anthology by J. Michael Leonard, including one 5 page funny animal strip and 3 one page pieces. As with CALCULUS CAT, the artwork by itself is good funny animal stuff and there is no knocking these guys on the basis of their art. The problem with writing effective comedy appears again however. The only section of this comix-booklet which appealed to me overall was a one page comic style strip written in verse, entitled "Birth of the Blues". For an eight panel strip it hold up quite well and was amusing. The strip describes the birth of Southern Blues via the birth of a music 'note.' Other than this the rest of this comix doesn't make it overall and is only slightly better than CALCULUS CAT.



Vernon Clark/Rating 4

IRON MOOSE #2,
$1.25 - 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 - 32 pages - Published by Scott Phillips, 6319 Driscoll Avenue, Albuquerque, NM 87109

IRON MOOSE is a comic genzine that includes superhero, SF and Fantasy as a part of its overall zine make up. And this issue is a very nice one due to the intriguing efforts of fan writer/artist John Howard.

Howard's contributions consist of three strip stories of consistent quality. "The Green Wombat" (4 pages) is a fairly well done parody of the super-hero/pulp mystery genre's done in Howard's cartoony style. "The Ihibitlian Chronicles" (3 pages) is a continued humorous heroic fantasy strip complete with a detailed world and map. The strip shows promise, though it is reproduced very small. Howard's final contribution and by far the best work in *IRON MOOSE* is his science fiction story "The Blue Man" (5 pp.), which uses the after the holocaust' theme to good effect. Surprisingly Howard utilizes his cartoony style very effectively in this more serious strip/story. An interesting writing shift while utilizing the same art style.

Regrettably the rest of IRON MOOSE fails to live up to Howard's well done contributions. The less said about them the better. This little comic zine definitely needs a firmer editorial control. It can be aggravating to see material of such a difference in quality printed together like this. The bad material only detracts from the better contributions and the overall zine quality. On the strength of John Howard's contributions I'll give IRON MOOSE a good rating. His stuff is worth it.

Rating 6/Vernon Clark

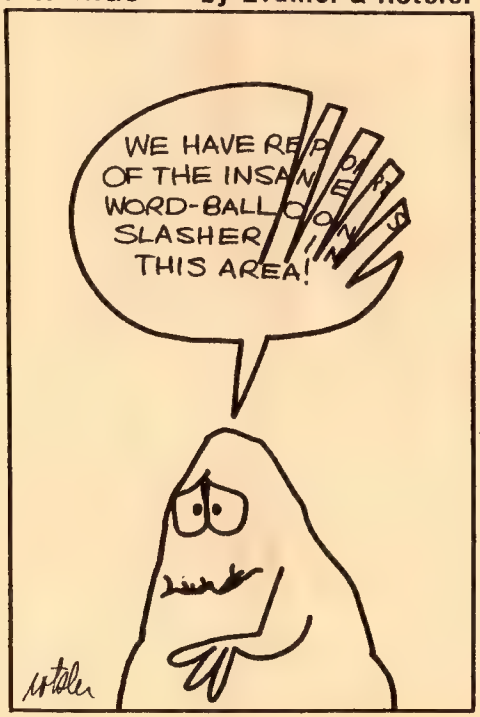
THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG 17
50–, 4/$2.00, 32 pages, 5½ x 8½, published by Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Road #207, Detroit, Mich. 48219

Unlike comics fandom, science fiction fandom has no major market zines like *THE BUYER'S GUIDE* where all the zines can advertise, ergo it's

harder for the new fan to find out what sf fandom really has to offer. One place I've already reviewed is *FANTASY NEWSLETTER*, but another place is this much more modest effort. This mimeographed zine lists all the zines the editor receives month by month and gives the publishing information and a brief description of each. All zines are listed equally, from the slick to the smallest personal-zine. Just from this one issue I learned of a few more zines that I wanted to see and find out more about because sf fandom has zines of all kinds and whatever they tend to be a bit more literate than the average comics zine, since the very nature of sf fandom deals with words and novels as opposed to the less demanding counterpart of comics. This zine also has a letters column, a short article on fanzine production and some editorial comments. It's a well done effort although a lot of the zines listed seem to be deserving of their obscurity. Still, some fine publications are unearthed herein for the curious and those who have more than just a passing interest in sf fandom.
RATING: 8 (James Van Hise)

PLAYBOY'S GAHAN WILSON—$5.95—64 pages —Published by Wideview Books
This is Gahan Wilson's eighth book and his second collection under the *Playboy* title.
Gahan Wilson is the greatest living cartoonist of the macabre. Is that overstating it? I don't think so. I've been following his work for twelve years and it has not diminished in effect in the slightest. His work continues to contain flashes of a berserk imagination that is uniquely his own. Not every cartoon is a classic, but for every weak image there are two amazing ones. Lately he has even tied his cartoons into more identifiably contemporary themes such as the one which shows sloppily dressed angels who have street clothes underneath their gowns and who mill around in a rundown, squalid courtyard which has a weathered crumbling sign above the gate labeled *Heaven*, whereupon ones of the inmates observes that, "Somehow I thought the whole thing would be a lot classier!"
Wilson's style is a free-flowing cartoon style reminiscent of Charles Addams, but with people who are more puffed-up and balloon-like, with strange potatoe-like noses and expressions that are generally grim, devious or maniacal. When a Gahan Wilson character smiles, it is because something dreadful is happening. His cartoons can be peopled with anyone from an alien, a wolfman, or an ordinary individual, although Wilson's typical person is drawn from the same vaguely repellant cast that people Woody Allen's *Stardust Memories*. To Wilson, virtually *no one* looks "normal."
If you haven't discovered Gahan Wilson's work yet, this book is an excellent place to start, especially since most of the cartoons are in full color.
RATING 10—JAMES VAN HISE

INKLINGS by Evanier & Rotsler



HI, I'M PORTIA PRINZ OF THE GLAMAZONS--AND BEFORE I STARTED MY NEWEST ADVENTURE, "GLAMAZON'S BURDEN", I READ ALL OF THE BOOKS IN THIS BOOKCASE!
HAVE YOU? NO? WELL, DON'T BOTHER--READ PORTIA PRINZ INSTEAD. NOT ONLY WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM MY APPLIED RESEARCH--
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Story and Art by Richard Howell.

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With a new introduction by Richard and Wendy Pini.

YOU WILL SUBSCRIBE TO RBCC

RBCC has been a regular staple of comics fandom since 1961 and in December of 1981 will have achieved 20 years of non-stop publication, a feat unprecedented in comics fandom. 1981 will also usher in another new era for the magazine in other ways, as it will now be typeset and will feature color covers.

1981 will see the start of an authorized comic strip adaptation of Edgar Rice Burrough's last Martian novel, **John Carter and the Skeleton Men of Jupiter**, drawn by Bret Blevins. **RBCC** is the only place that you will find this important comics serial.

RBCC will also cover films and SF. There will be features of the new **Flash Gordon**, as well as coverage of important sf novels and collections, including examinations of Frank Herbert's **Dune** saga and the work of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

The comics scene will also be covered in features on Steve Ditko's Spider-Man which will examine what made this series unique and why it epitomizes what Marvel comics were all about in the early Sixties. Plus, an editor at one of the comics companies recently told a writer that "Comics are not meant to show feelings." **RBCC** will take that statement to task and show exactly why it's completely wrong.

RBCC is **the** magazine that covers comics, fantasy, science fiction, and film. Don't miss a single issue! A full year's subscription, four quarterly issues, is only $12.00.

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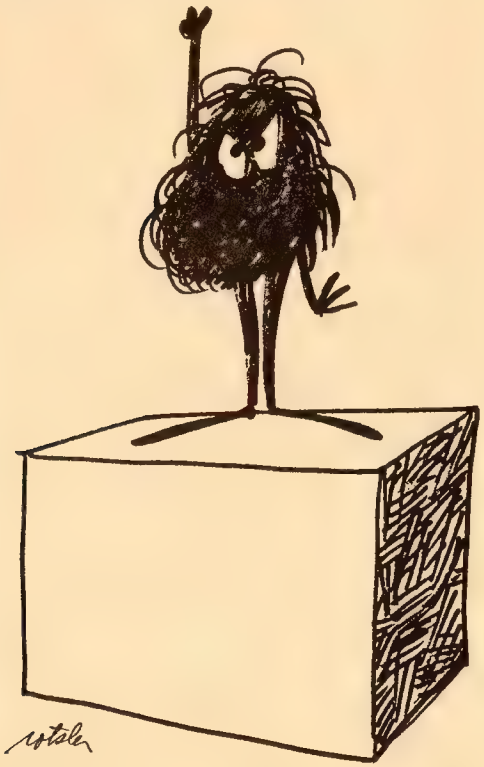
For those of you out there who haunt the sale racks of your local bookstores, shuffle off to odd and exotic locales only to find yourself hovering over half-price stacks of publisher's discards, peepers wide open to snag whatever li'l gems may linger...well, for those of you, there's this here column. Here's a few books I've luckily stumbled upon over the past year or so in my travels, and maybe if I mention 'em to you, you'll turn around and write about some interesting items *you've* found, and this one-shot column might turn into something we can all take a look at every issue to find out what might be waiting for us, somewhere, sometime, on those 'Sale Books' shelves...

Under the deceptively dull title of *Let's Play Chess* (by Anthony Zansford; hardcover, 1980, Octopus Books, London) lurk some knock-out color paintings by John Bolton in which armies of chess pieces are brought to life in all their barbaric splendor: Rooks ride giant armored wooly mammoths, beautious Queens fire magical bolts of energy from their fingers, Knights on horseback and crusader Bishops battle it out iwith shimmering swords and massive maces, faceless pawns scuttle up on unsuspecting firelit guards and stab them in the back in sneaky opening moves. Chess never looked so good! For anyone who might be unfamiliar with John Bolton's work, take a look at the King Kull story in BIZARRE ADVENTURES #26, or his color story in EPIC #7...and if you like what you see (I sure do!), check this book out. Be wary; comic shops are selling copies of *Let's Play Chess* for $10 and up...whereas it can be found in bookstores with the other slew of Octopus picturebooks (on cooking, travel, animals, you name it) for three or four bucks. A damn good bargain, and one to look for.

Edward Sorel's pen is as sharp as that of David Levine or Oliphant, as demonstrated for years now in the pages of *Esquire, Atlantic, The Village Voice*, etc., scribbly itchy lines and all. His caricatures and observations are on-target, lucidly funny and scarey at the same time, a brand of cartooning which had never seemed to me to be—well, intimate, perhaps because editorial cartooning's lifeblood is usually nothing less than the often staggering tapestry of this country's (and this planet's) political and public arena of events. One of these boxes of $1.99 books in Woolworth's showed me otherwise: *Superpen* by Edward Sorel (hardcover, 1978, Random House) presents a wide array of Sorel's works and wit...a caustic eye cast out on the world, and in on the cartoonist himself and the conventions (and possibilities) of'comics', the flow and form of sequential panels with word balloons and characters livid with the life of the scribbly itchy lines.

At a time when my fascination with the paintings of H.R. Gigerr was at a peak of sorts, a close friend turned me on to *Manas Manna*, the paintings of Bob Venosa collected into book (paperbound) form by none other than Big O Publishing of London (publishers of Giger's *Necronomicon*). I don't mean to shade Bob Venosa's unique vision with that of Giger's eerie ouevre, but I wonder if I would have been so responsive to the beauty of Venosa's manipulations of light had I not bathed so completely (with so many others who were dazzled and outraged by the revelation of Giger's vision as it reached us in the wake of ALIEN) in the beauty of Giger's monstrous meditations of

darkness. Such beauty is almost unbearably alluring, and Venosa provides a necessary *balance*, if you will...the spiritual polar extremity to Giger's demonic art, rendered with the same compelling, unflinching clarity. Whereas Giger revels in the textures of bloated flesh and polished metal fused into unholy, tangible life, Venosa Celebrates shimmering liquid-crystalline organics. Giger's beings take the shapes of Satanic minions and seething monsters, reeking of death, while Venosa's creations embrace the Godhead amid the spectrum of ethereal light, breathing love. And, to belabor the bonding of Venosa and Giger's Big O showcases, *Manas Manna* couples its visuals with a lengthy autobiographical text by the artist. The resulting glimpse into the life and loves (not the least of which are his paintings) of the man and his art more than equals that offered by you-know-who in the *Necronomicon*. Taken individually, both of these artists can touch the soul; approached together, in the form of the two companion books, they provide good medicine to the open 'reader'. They can heal.



A closer spiritual companion to Venosa, and a closer comrade on the cut-rate book shelves, might be found in Abdul Mati Klarwein's *God Jokes* (paperbound, 1976, Harmony Books). I was first exposed to Klarwein's paintings via the Miles Davis albums *Bitches' Brew* and *Live/Evil*, so this collection came as a welcome opportunity to further explore his meticulous portraits of mystical mergers of people and places, emotions and events, riddles and enigmas...there are no proper words to describe *God Jokes*. Klarwein's meager text echoes the same teasing sense of a prankster voodoo-priest that is at work in his colorful pictures. Some may find it elusive and frustrating, while others will find themselves embracing this crafty trickster's sorcery. An earlier autobiographical Klarwein volume, *Milk N'Honey* (1973, Harmony Books), might also show itself in the bookstacks...

Two big, handsome hardbacks offer some of the most striking depictions of wildlife you're ever likely to come across, short of photobooks or, better yet, taking the time to lay still in a stretch of woods long enough to see 'em in the flesh.

The Worlds of Ernest Thompson Seton (Edited by John G. Samson, 1976, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.) provides a stunning example from the works of Seton, which included innumerable sketches, journals, diaries, paintings, and a legacy of published books (*Wild Animals I Have Known*, *Lives of the Hunted*, etc.) which he wrote and illustrated. A lavish book, the finest imaginable introduction to Seton's lifework you'll ever find, or, if you're already familiar with Seton's talents, an excellent binding of his scribblings and rarely-seen watercolors and oil renderings of our country's natural citizens in action. Arteests and aspiring arteests take note: Seton's drawings provide, without a doubt, the best available reference for the anatomy of North American animals. Study his drawings, or swipe if you must, but definitely *check him out*. If you're really interested, scope out a copy of Seton's *Art Anatomy of Animals* (1977, Running Press, Philadelphia; $7.95—and not, to my knowledge, available on the sale shelves of any bookstore) for an exhaustive (though academic and dryly diagramatic) reference.

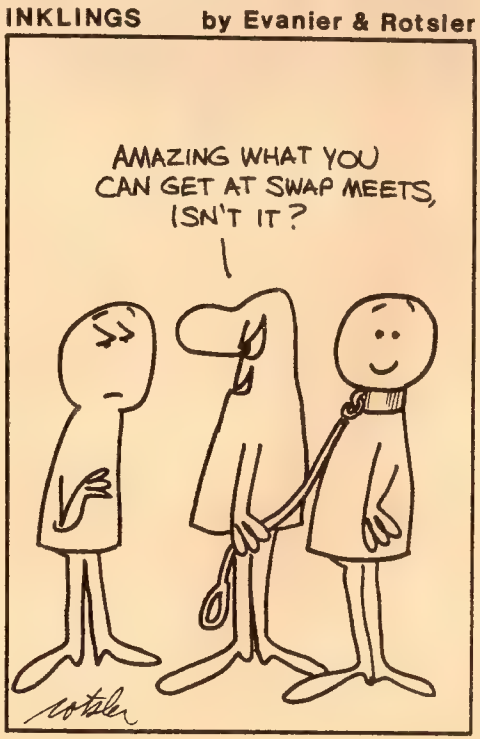
The other big beauty comes from the Dutch fellow who illustrated the best-seller *Gnomes*, Rien Poortvliet. It's entitled *The Living Forest*, (1979, Abrams, Inc.) accurately enough, for his animals do indeed *live*; Poortvliet, like Seton, is a naturalist whose ability to not only portray his furry and feathered subjects, but to actually capture that spark of life in each of them, is uncanny. The book's information is laid out in the 'offhand' notebook-quality of *Gnomes* and *Faeries*, with text and illos tightly integrated within the book's spacious format. There is nothing 'offhand' about the watercolor mastery of Rien Poortvliet, though.

Here's a real oddity: *The Ad-Maze*, subtitled

"A photographic excursion into the dreams of an adman", as "created and photographed" by Pat Galanti (hardcover, 1968, A.S. Barnes and Co., Inc., London). It's a graphic-novel length *fumetti* (that may be a bastardized blend of terms, but since both "graphic novels" and *fumettis* are still amorphous terms in the U.S. of A., it'll do for now) that lovingly chronicles the dilemma of one Gil Ford, an advertising art director who goes off the deep end when his latest ad campaign fantasy-figure, a woman he calls Eurasia, becomes an obsession. So Gil, you see, loses touch with 'reality', and thereby hangs the turgid tale, complete with hallucinatory experiences involving umbrellas, diving suits, guitars, wigs, ropes and bondage (no, now, see, there ya go...it's poor ol' Gil who's tied and tortured), and a bevy of models with names like Passionella and the ilk, (Ilk!) all floundering amidst tacky pop-graphics and lotsa shots of poor Gil's face distorted through lenses. Pat Galanti and his cast apparently believed in what they were doing, but what can you say about a book that begins with a dedication to 'Eurasia' and ends with the words and music to a song written especially for the book entitled—what else?—'Eurasia'? It's frightening! Also hilarious...a treasure, a thoroughly entertaining and endearingly wretched cultural document, in the same vein of THE SLIME PEOPLE, PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE, "Green Acres", and (more to the point) those color newstand fumetti soap-operas (*kiss, darling,* etc.).Pass the ketchup...(Urp!)

Another real oddity: *Professor Mmaa's Lecture* (hardcover, 1975, Overlook Press) by Stefan Themerson. What attracted me to this book, and what might attract other comic-book folk, is the dust-jacket's use of two panels from a Jack Kirby "Antman" story, along with a textbook illo of termites, as illustrations. One panel especially snagged me, one of Kirby's "ant's-eye view" shots, with human figures ridiculously proportioned to suggest the exaggerated perspective: tiny heads, Titan hands, and COLOSSAL FEET. The inside back leaf of the jacket sports a photo of the author with the same up-shot perspective, arms folded and face brooding. "Hey, this is sharp!", I thought, and took it home to read it...what a weird book! A dense fantasy about life in a termite society's structured madness, direct and indirect observations of our own sexual-socio-political-religious fixations and abberations; amusing, compelling, and occassionally nasty and jarring, almost Kafkaesque. It also brought to mind Karel Capek's *War With the Newts*, though I'll qualify that by saying I found Capek's fantasy (and analogies) more accessible. Illustrated with nifty little margin sketches by Franciszka Themerson.

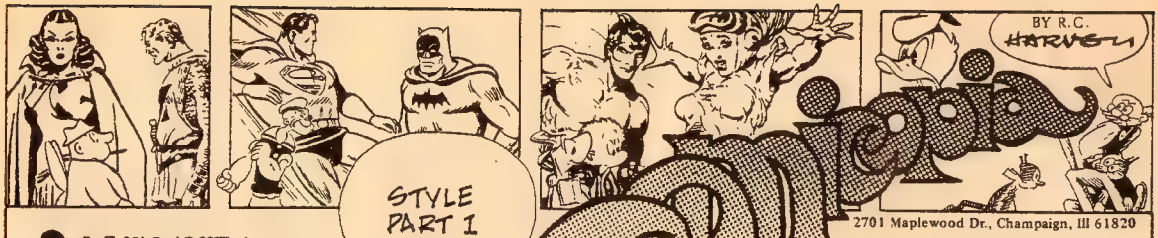
Rudyard Kipling's illustrations for *Just So Stories* (hardcover, 1978 edition, Weathervane Books) were new to me, though the stories remain, comfortably, their same old selves. No need to talk about Kipling's marvelous tales; surely many of us grew up listening to 'em, even if we didn't always recognise them as being Kipling's creations. His illustrations, however, do call for some attention: bold pen and ink line drawings, most of them stark and simple, with punchy, direct use of silhouettes and masses of black alongside careful fine-line greys. One in particular, for'The Cat that Walked by Himself', eloquently depicts the story's hero "walking by his wild lone through the Wet Wild Woods and waving his wild tail," a small, self-content black feline strutting into a narrowing perspective of black trees. Another favorite pictures a giant sea-monster that figures in 'The Butterfly That Stamped' (He was really quite a nice animal, and his Mummy was very fond of him and of his twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine other brothers that lived as the bottom of the sea."); yet another is a scraggly mess of a map of "The Turbid Amazon" which, Kipling confesses, "Hasn't anything to do with the story except that there are two Armadillos in it—up by the top." The crudeties of these drawings are intrinsic to their charm, labors of love reflecting the personality of the writer whose works have stood



the test of time. Needless to say, Kipling's drawings also reflect the period of time during which they were drawn; the styles of his contemporaries and touches of art nouveau ring true.

A novel, sans illustrations, that I'd like to recommend to any and all horror movie buffs out there is *The Late Great Creature* by Brock Brower (hardcover, 1971,Atheneum; also in paperback), a glorious tribute to the sappy ends that have dampened the careers of beloved genre stars like Bela, Boris, Vincent, and on and on. Well, no sappy capper for Brower's fictional horror star, Simon Moro, whose last film echoes the worst of Roger Corman's Poe films. Moro takes the bull by the balls, as it were, and turns the advertising campaign and opening-night publicity into a genuine reign of terror...and thereby hangs the grisly tale,spiced by the meaty details of Moro's career in films and the seedy glimpses of Moro's life and lusts. Brower spends pages documenting Moro's films, describing his fictional additions to the hall of horror fame with such wit and precision that one finds oneself aching to catch GHOULGANTUA on late-night television. It's an obscure but definitive funeral march for the era of horror films that came to a miserable conclusion in the late '60's, while it also anticipates the opening of the floodgates by the likes of George Romero, Tobe Hooper, and their twisted cine-spawn that dared to assault & genuinely *frighten* their audiences with the coming of the '70's. It's also an often moving piece of writing, with a crazy-quilt cast of characters, some savage bits of humor, and, above all, Simon Moro, a larger-than-life creation who brings nasty life to every deviant notion you might have ever entertained about Bela, Boris, or dear old Vincent.

Finally, if you leave the bargain shelves to nose around the racks in the children's books section, or perhaps even in the toy store across the way, you'll perhaps dig out a series of coloring books put out by Bellerophon Books (36 Anacapa St., Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101) that showcase the talents of none other than Greg Irons, whose underground epics in the likes of SKULL, SLOW DEATH, and DEVIANT SLICE could induce spasms of revulsion into the most jaded EC-addict. Well, Irons mellowed out long enough to crank out four or five (maybe more) beautiful coloring books suitable for the most delicate brain-pans. Three of 'em are about dinosaurs (*All New Dinosaurs and their friends; The Last of the Dinosaurs;* and *A Coloring Book of Dinosaurs*), and are chock-full of new info about the previous residents of Mother Earth, accompanied by some of Irons' most eye-pleasing brushwork in print, wielding an impeccable sense of design and detail. Ditto the Irons-illos in *A Coloring Book of Sea Mammals* and *Pirates*, though these two seem a bit simpler in execution than the prehistoric landscapes, brimming with a rich variety of flora and fauna...anyhoot, they all go for less than $3 a shot, so give 'em a gander. The covers are embellished with tasty colors, likewise courtesy of master color-separater Irons.



2701 Maplewood Dr., Champaign, Ill 61820

AS I WAS ABOUT to say before I so rudely interrupted myself (it has been over a year, you know, since I last belabored the "theory of comics" in this corner), despite the pontifical ring of the phrase, the Theory of Comics being explored here is not offered as THE Theory of Comics. No capital letters. No fanfare, no drumroll, no thousand-throated choral accompaniment. Just "a" theory. Mine, mostly--aided and abetted by whatever correspondence ensues.

Fact is, criticism of the art of the comic strip springs from no formal theoretical foundation. Yet. At present, it consists helter-skelter of a heap of personal opinions and perceptions being aired throughout fandom. That's all any criticism is, of course--until some opinions attract enough agreement to constitute a kind of "school of thought." Before that can happen, we need to develop a vocabulary of terms and ideas that are suited to the medium, and we need to examine and squabble over a lot of different persons' perceptions of how the art is practiced. So the Theory of Comics put forth herein is but my attempt to define some terms--in the process, trotting out my perceptions for public squabbling over. (Dissenting as well as assenting squabbles are welcomed by the perpetrator, yours truly.)

By way of goading you into action, let me plunge ahead to perpetrate a few paragraphs on graphic "style." Fortunately for fuzzy thinkers, "style" has taken up with "fashion" in common parlance, and the two are seen hand-in-hand often enough that it's easy to assume that this temporary liaison is a legitimate marriage. The association leads to the erroneous conclusion that there is a "good" style (fashionable) and a "bad" style (unfashionable). Not so. "Style" has other meanings than "fashion," and the one I want is found buried in the expression "life-style"--having to do with habit and character traits.

By "graphic style" I mean the characteristic combination of drawing techniques habitually used by a cartoonist. Style is the result, the final effect, of the way a cartoonist uses pen and brush. Since it is pervasive in the appearance of any graphic artist's work, it is one of the most obvious attributes of a visual medium like the comics, and of the graphic or visual elements of the art, style is perhaps the easiest to isolate for separate analysis. Style is also a peculiarly personal--individual--thing. Doubly so.

First, graphic style is the mark of individuality in art. The style is the man: it identifies the artist, setting his work apart from the work of all other artists. Therefore, there is no such thing as a "good" style or a "bad" style. There is only one artist's style as distinct from another artist's style.

THE SECOND peculiarly individual thing about style is that preferences for one style over another vary (almost irrationally) among viewers/readers. I prefer one artist's style to another's--not because the first is any "better" than the second but because the first somehow "suits" me better. I like the "feel" of it. So eccentric are such individual preferences that unless you share mine to begin with, there is not much I can

Theory of COMICS

STYLE is one of several graphic or visual aspects of comic strip art. The others include: narrative breakdown (the division of the story into narrative panels), composition (camera distance and angle, and the arrangement of various elements within each panel), and layout (the size and arrangement of the panels themselves in relation to each other). The creative processes of the cartoonist weave these graphic elements into whole cloth in which each thread's significance is bound together with all the others in determining the appearance, the visual qualities, of his art. A cartoonist is not likely to think of any of these aspects of his work as wholly separable from the others, but for the sake of analysis and discussion, we can label each aspect and talk about it--always with the tacit recognition that extended discussion of one graphic element will invariably lead to consideration of the others.

THE SOLDIERS REMAIN AT ATTENTION, THINKING THE MUSIC IS A SERENADE TO THE OFFICERS ... SCORCHY LEAPS OUT OF THE CAB ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE AND THROWS THE SWITCH ....
OH AM I DUMB! — DON'T YOU SEE— HE EXPECTED US TO DO JUST WHAT WE'VE DONE—GET IN THE BOAT TO RUN IT IN SHORE...
HOLY SMOKE, YES! ENOUGH TO BLOW US SKY HIGH! — KRAG PLANNED THIS JUST TO TRAP US!
UND LUKE AT DIS, SCORCHER SCHMIDT!
NOW WE'RE FRIENDS. YOU MIGHT PUT AWAY THAT GUN—
I'M SORRY— I WAS AFRAID YOU MIGHT BE—
MIGHT BE WHAT?
OH, I DON'T KNOW— MAYBE A BURGLAR—
UNCLE!
BANG

NOEL SICKLES' SCORCHY SMITH (above) and Alex Raymond's SECRET AGENT X-9. One clue to an impressionistic style lies in a cartoonist's rendering of such details as hands. In an impressionistically drawn strip, hands are often not given much detail. At a certain distance from the camera (say, a medium-length shot) the knuckles are not drawn, and the fingers become a simple row of parallel lines. An illustrator, on the other hand, nearly always indicates knuckles and joints. Thus, an illustrator tends to render detail thoroughly, while an impressionist suggests details with flecks of shadow, or with a few quick strokes of the pen or brush.

do to persuade you to like the styles I like.

For these reasons, discussions of style are doubtless most valid critically if they confine themselves to the purest sort of description--the kind that is entirely devoid of evaluation. We can, of course, say what we like about the styles we discuss. And we can sometimes make a case for asserting that one style is more appropriate to a given subject than another. For example, I suspect that the negative reaction to much of the comic book work of Frank Robbins a couple years ago arose from the fact that his style is not well suited to rendering the musculature of superheroes. He's not a "bad" cartoonist; and his style isn't "bad." It's just not appropriate when judged against most of the other styles prevalent in superhero comics--styles we're more accustomed to seeing in superhero books.

But even judgments about appropriateness are subject to the judge's preferences. (I happen to like Robbins' style.) To avoid such pitfalls, critical analysis of style ought to confine itself to the kind of description by which we seek to discover the distinctive qualities of one style as opposed to another--rather than to attempt the impossible: to say why one style is "better" than another. Description requires some workable terms and some categories, so I'll start with some of each.

COMIC STRIPS can be drawn in a realistic manner (like ON STAGE) or in a cartoon manner (like B.C. or BLONDIE)--or in a way that combines aspects of both (like LI'L ABNER). It's fairly easy to distinguish the graphic treatment of ON STAGE from that of BLONDIE, but why make up a third category for LI'L ABNER? Because of "grotesques."

Much of LI'L ABNER was rendered realistically. But many of the characters were drawn without any regard for realism in human proportions. Such characters I call "grotesques." Mammy and Pappy Yokum were grotesques--although when LI'L ABNER began, they were almost normally proportioned humans.

A comic strip that is drawn realistically except for the occasional appearance of a grotesque is one that burlesques reality. And that's the name I give to this manner of drawing.

Among comic strips drawn realistically, the graphic techniques seem to fall roughly into at least two schools: I call them "illustrative" and "impressionistic." Hal Foster and Alex Raymond started the illustrative school; Milton Caniff and Noel Sickles, the impressionistic school.

Realism in graphic treatment is marked by an attempt

COO-EEE!
SHAKEN BY THE SIGHT OF HAZ' BARED GUN, A BEFUDDLED VENDOR PANICS--RECOILING BACKWARD!
BACK, BLUDDY! NO...NOT THAT WAY,!
HIS SUDDEN MOVE EFFECTIVELY BLOCKS VARIAN FROM GETTING OFF A TELLING SHOT...
BLAST! OUT'E MY WAY..!
THEN...COMPLETELY OFF BALANCE...
YI-I-I-I!
I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO YOU AND NITRO, FLANK. YOU'RE THE BEST!
WE'RE A GOOD TEAM, RIP.
OH, WELL, ANY KISS IS BETTER THAN NONE!
2-28

FRANK ROBBINS' JOHNNY HAZARD (above), John Prentice's RIP KIRBY, and Pete Hoffman's JEFF COBB (right). A key to distinguishing an illustrative style from an impressionistic one lies in the cartoonist's treatment of wrinkles in clothing. Cartoonists who indicate wrinkles with lines belong in the illustrative school; those who indicate wrinkles and folds more with black solids (for shadows) than with lines are in the impressionistic school.

to be faithful to nature, to the natural appearance of things. The illustrative school of cartoonists achieves fidelity to nature largely through the use of lines; the impressionistic school, through the use of shapes: black solids act as shadows, suggesting the forms of things rather than delineating them in detail.

The essence of the illustrative method is definite delineation and outline; the essence of the impressionistic method, suggestion.

Both impressionists and illustrators use black for shadows. But for the impressionist, most of the figures in his strip are "in shadow" one way or another. They are frequently nothing but shadow; the lower halves of bodies, particularly, tend to "melt" into shadows--regardless of the fact that an actual (or imagined) light source would probably not produce such shadows. For the impressionist, those shadows suggest the shapes of things. In contrast, the illustrator puts shadows only where they might naturally fall--where something has been cut off from a light source.

A THIRD SCHOOL of realistic rendering might be called "expressionistic." An expressionistic artist seeks the illusion of reality in his work, but he will distort or exaggerate forms with the objective of conveying a feeling (of power, say, or of movement) rather than of conveying faithfully the actual appearances of nature. Burne Hogarth is a vocal proponent of this school of realistic drawing--although he doesn't call it "expressionism." His TARZAN generally looks realistic, but every muscle and tendon of the figures are etched in bulging flex. No human musculature ripples constantly as clearly as Tarzan's under Hogarth's pen. But the effect is to convey a sense of Tarzan's physical power even if the character happens to be standing motionless.

Every artist who draws superheroes has taken this leaf from Hogarth's book--and many of them take another page from Jack Kirby, whose exaggerations tend to suggest movement as well as power. Gil Kane's work (particularly in the newspaper strip STAR HAWKS) distills from both Hogarth and Kirby, producing an anatomical shorthand that conveys both power and movement with simple shapes and forms--muscles appearing as fully delineated balls of flesh.

Forty years ago, it was relatively easy to distinguish among the three schools of realistic drawing. But over the years, artists have borrowed what they liked from one another's techniques, and today we can find single drawings that embrace all schools. The dominant school today is doubtless the illustrative--although

...I MEAN A MANAGER MAKES PRODUCERS PAY MORE MONEY FOR HIS CLIENT, SO THE PRODUCERS CAN'T LIKE HIM...
...THERE'S A BIT MORE TO IT, FAYE...
LEONARD STARR 2-18
...AND THEN HE TAKES A PERCENTAGE OF HIS CLIENTS' INCOME, SO HOW CAN THEY LIKE HIM?...
ARE YOU APOLOGIZING FOR ADRIAN SQUIRE?
MEANWHILE...
...WHAT'LL I TELL MA IF SHE SUSPECTS THAT THERE'S MORE THAN BUSINESS TO ALL THIS?...
...THAT YOU'RE TOO FAR BENEATH ME.

ON STAGE by Leonard Starr

significant borrowings from the other two schools tend to blur clear distinctions. Nonetheless, labelling a technique "illustrative" or "impressionistic" (because that's what it is--mostly) helps in describing and identifying a style.

Thus, Joe Kubert and Frank Thorne have their roots in the impressionistic school--although both have abandoned extensive shadowing in favor of predominantly linear treatments. And John Buscema, Vince Colletta, and John Romita are essentially illustrative--with some indebtedness to both expressionism and impressionism.

In addition to describing a cartoonist's style by placing it in the appropriate school, we can identify a style by the character of the line-work itself.

Line-work can be described by reference to the instrument used--pen or brush. An impressionist like Robbins, for instance, makes liberal use of a brush to indicate the wrinkles and folds that suggest his characters' clothing. But Robbins also uses a pen--for faces and details. And most cartoonists today use both pen and brush.

Some illustrators use a brush for delicate details as well as for bold lines and black solids. So supple are their brushes, that it is often impossible to tell from the strips themselves whether a brush is used more than a pen. An impressionist might be similarly adept with brush. George Wunder, for example, used a brush throughout his TERRY--but many of his lines are so tiny, so delicate, that they seem to be pen strokes. In the absence of definite information (like an original drawing or testimony of the cartoonist), one is driven to deduce the instrument from the appearance of the lines.

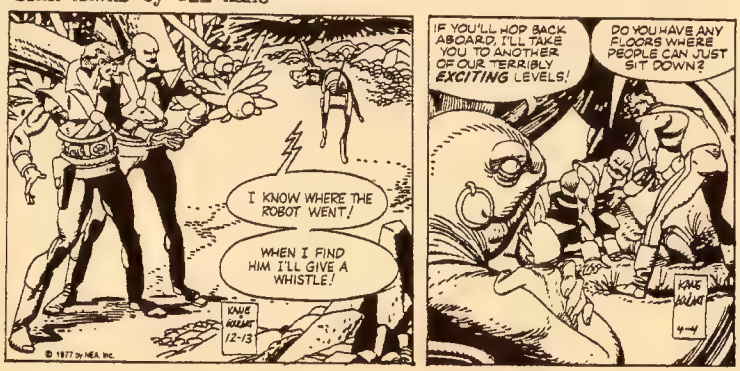
A style, then, has a brush-stroke appearance or a pen-like appearance. In effect, regardless of the actual instrument used, we can describe the appearance of the lines. Thus, Robbins' lines are bold, heavy brush strokes--in contrast to the fragile airiness of the pen-work of John Dixon's lines in the Australian AIR HAWK.

Dixon's work is sketchy, too: sometimes lines are incomplete, or disconnected, or go beyond their logical termination point (where two lines come together to outline the corner of a table, both lines may extend a little beyond that corner). In contrast to the impressionist Dixon, consider the illustrative Leonard Starr (ON STAGE), who normally completes his outlines, finishes his lines, almost always terminates lines at the edges of the shapes they define.

Starr varies the thickness of his lines, too: a single outline may be made by a flexible line that begins thin, waxes thick, and then tapers off to a hairline again. Dixon's lines are thinner than Starr's, and almost never vary in that thinness.

ANOTHER TECHNIQUE of line-work is "feathering." Instead of drawing a wrinkle, say, with a single hard line, a cartoonist "softens" the line (makes it less definite) by using several fine pen or brush strokes. John Prentice (RIP KIRBY) makes frequent use of feathering. And Neal Adams (in BEN CASEY and elsewhere) and Stan Drake (JULIET JONES) use feathering to model folds in clothing to a remarkably soft appearance. On the other hand, Al Williamson (SECRET AGENT CORRIGAN) seldom uses the technique.

STAR HAWKS by Gil Kane


I KNOW WHERE THE ROBOT WENT!
WHEN I FIND HIM I'LL GIVE A WHISTLE!
KANE WILLIAMS 12-13
© 1977 by NEA, Inc.
IF YOU'LL HOP BACK ABOARD, I'LL TAKE YOU TO ANOTHER OF OUR TERRIBLY EXCITING LEVELS!
DO YOU HAVE ANY FLOORS WHERE PEOPLE CAN JUST SIT DOWN?
KANE WILLIAMS 9-14

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO KILL THE POWER SOURCE TO THE LASER GENERATOR-
-THE COMPUTER WILL HAVE TO BE RE-PROGRAMMED!
CAN YOU DO IT, TANIA?

AIR HAWK by John Dixon

BEN CASEY by Neal Adams

John Cullen Murphy's style in PRINCE VALIANT is remarkably similar to Hal Foster's. But one of the tiny albeit noticeable differences results from different feathering techniques. Foster's feathering strokes were bolder than Murphy's are. And Murphy frequently softens the kind of line that Foster would have drawn boldly, as a single brush stroke. (Another difference: Foster's lines tended to be flowing, continuous; Murphy's are often broken in a sort of sketchy way.)

Instead of feathering sometimes, Murphy uses a "dry brush" technique--in which the brush is almost emptied of ink before it is applied to the drawing. The resulting line is a mass of tiny, broken brush strokes instead of a single, bold stroke. Foster seldom (if ever) used a dry brush.

Useful as an analysis of style is in making such subtle distinctions, we haven't yet assembled all the analytical equipment we need. We'll pick up some of the remaining pieces next time, when this discussion will be both prolonged and ended. —HARV

SAM! LACE DIDN'T THINK SHE'D SEE YOU AGAIN AFTER THAT FIRST WILD VISIT! NOW YOU'VE GOT THE WHOLE ARMED FORCES WITH YOU! COME IN AND GRAB SOME FLOOR— WHILE STEVE POURS!
I THINK I'D BETTER STICK AROUND AND SEE WHAT'S UP WITH UNCLE'S NEW KID! LINE OF DUTY, OF COURSE!
MILTON CANIFF
©Field Enterprises, Inc., 1978
LACE © M.C.

GIRLS OF comicopia

A YEAR AGO in this space, we saw a collection of Milton Caniff's girls from the CANYON years--including Miss Lace, who cavorted in armed forces publications during WWII. In October 1978, she put in a brief reappearance in the Defense Department's newest effort, SAM (for Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine). Thanques to Shel Dorf for the clip.

MARK BURBEY'S INTERVIEW

A TALK WITH MOE HOWARD

In *VISIONS OF CODY*, reknowned author Jack Kerouac, in his inimitable, rambling stream-of-consciousness style, wrote the following about the Three Stooges:

"Supposing the Three Stooges were real? (and so I saw them spring into being at the side of Cody in the street right there in front of the station), Curly, Moe and Larry...; Moe the leader, mopish, mowbry, mope-mouthed, mealy, mad, hanging, making the others quake; whacking Curly on the iron pate, backhanding Larry (who wonders); picking up a sledgehammer, honk, and ramming it down nozzle first on the flatpan of Curly's skull, boing, and all big dumb convict Curly does is muckle and yukkle and squeal, pressing his lips, shaking his old butt like jelly, knotting his Jell-o fists, eyeing Moe, who looks back at him with that lowered and surly "Well what are you gonna do about it?" under thunderstorm eyebrows like the eyebrows of Beethoven, completely ironbound in his surls, Larry in his angelic or rather he really looks like he conned the other two to let him join the group, so they had to pay him all these years a regular share of the salary to them who worked so hard with the props—Larry, goofhaired, mopple-lipped, lisped, muxed and completely flunk—trips over a pail of whitewash and falls face first on a seven-inch nail that remains imbedded in his eye-bone... Moe yanks out his eye, impales him with an eight-foot steel rod; it gets worse and worse, it started out on an innocent thumbing, which led to backhand, then the pastries, then the nose yanks, blap, bloop, going going, gong..."

For an author of Kerouac's stature to work the Three Stooges into a fictional work, I think, says something about the comedy team's greatness.

In earlier drafts of this introduction, I found myself defending my admiration for the Three Stooges, and I resented it. People usually think of the Marx Brothers when they think of great and famous comedy teams, classifying the Three Stooges as kiddie fare.

The primary reason that the Marx Brothers are held in higher esteem is that they made films, as opposed to short subjects. The Stooges appeared in feature films during the 40's, but they never

starred in any until the 1960's when they made kiddie features like *AROUND THE WORLD IN A DAZE* and *HAVE ROCKET, WILL TRAVEL*. The heyday of the Stooges' career was during the 40's and early 50's, when Curly, and later Shemp, played the part of the third Stooge. The shorts declined in quality as the years passed and the series neared its end, but only because the studio had long lost interest in the shorts and allotted smaller and smaller budgets for their production. The Marx Brothers would have fared no better. Neither team was better than the material they were doing. If you watch all of the Marx Brothers' films and analyze them, you'll realize that they aren't all the classic that *ANIMAL CRACKERS* is.

The material you'll be seeing in this and the next couple installments of this column was intended for a special, one-shot Three Stooges fanzine. James Van Hise was to be the publisher. I had many fine professional and amateur cartoonists lined up to do art (some of which you see here), I had many more stills than you'll be seeing here, and this Moe Howard interview would have been the main text feature.

The idea was killed, however, when we ran into legal problems.

The finest Stooges comic book ever produced was published by St. John back in the 50's. The art was by Norman Maurer (who, besides being Moe Howard's son-in-law and executor of the Howard/Stooges estate, directed and produced their feature films and last work) and it was quite stylish and detailed. In working on my proposed zine, I contacted Maurer to see if perhaps he had some stats or originals of some of that art that I might reprint.

What resulted was his refusal to let us do the zine at all, unless we paid a $2500 licensing fee. It made no difference that we only intended to print between 500-1000 copies.

What you'll be seeing is the material that was assembled before the project was cancelled.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed art, DENNIS FUJITAKE, RICK GEARY, LARRY RIPPEE, BOB VOJTKO, ALAN HANLEY, TIM FULLER, FRED HEMBECK, and especially GRASS GREEN and EDDIE EDDINGS, who pencilled and inked the Stooges strip I wrote. Also, thanks to Field Newspaper Syndicate for permission to reprint the Wizard of Id strip.

This interview was conducted by dick Syatt on his radio show back in 1972 or '73. I believe it was conducted over the telephone, recorded, and then broadcast, oddly enough, several years later, after Moe Howard's death.

DICK SYATT: HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START IN SHOW BUSINESS, AND WHAT ARE YOUR EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS?

MOE HOWARD: The first motion picture I was in was in 1908, as a little boy. And when I say little boy I mean, uh, I was eleven years old.

SYATT: UH HUH.

HOWARD: And I had fourteen freckles on my face, but they covered the whole face—real jagged looking things like you never saw.

SYATT: WERE THEY YOUR OWN FRECKLES?

HOWARD: Yeah, I was just born with the things!

SYATT: UH HUH.

HOWARD: I was quite a truant boy. School was annoying to me. And the truant officers were searching for me all over the place, because all the time I was around the Vitagraph Studio in Brooklyn, where I was born and raised—in the Bensonhurst area of Brooklyn.

The old Vitagraph Studio was on the old Brighton Beach line at Alm Avenue and Avenue N. So, I used to, uh, I started out by talking to the old gateman at the Vitagraph Studio. He used to have orders to get sandwiches across the tracks at a delicatessen store—and I finally prevailed upon him to say, "Look, Dad, you sit there. You give me the orders and I'll go over there and get them for you." Which I did. Of course, I had an ulterior motive. So, I get the sandwiches and the orders and give it to him, and he'd go in the studio and pass them around.

SYATT: DID YOU EVER GET TO GO INTO THE STUDIO?

HOWARD: Oh, yeah. Well, now, a little later, oh, about a month or so later, I said,uh, I said to the old gentleman, I said, "Dad, why don't you just take it easy? Now, I know your job here. I'll get the orders, I'll fill the orders, and I'll bring them in for you. You don't have to run in there all the time. If I get any tips I'll give them to you." He said that was delightful.

(Syatt chuckles in a nice way.)

HOWARD: So, at any rate, I did that, and after the third day, there was a director there called VAN DYKE BROOKS, who was directing a young boy about eighteen years of age, called KENNETH CASEY. And they were making a very fine film, using this boy on two or three occasions a year. Then one day the director spotted me, and he asked somebody who I was, what I was doing in the studio, he'd like to use me.

So that's how I got into the first thing with Kenneth Casey. I was in three of his pictures where I was the bully in the picture. And all the time he'd straighten me out, make me a nice boy, and I would, from there on I would be nice and gentle and everything else.

SYATT: I WONDER IF THESE PICTURES ARE STILL AROUND?

HOWARD: Oh yeah, they're around, out, uh, they made guitar picks out of them.

SYATT: OH—

HOWARD: No, they don't have those. You see, that was all on nitrate film which wouldn't last, you know, they were very highly flammable.

SYATT: HMMM—

HOWARD: At any rate, and even then I went in and I had made, uh, many films with, I don't know if you ever knew these names: JOHN BUNNY AND FLORA FINCH, LILLIAN WILLIAMS, FLORENCE TURNER, MAURICE COSTELLO, I made films with all these people. And all the time the truant officers were looking for me—

SYATT: HA, HA.

HOWARD:—and they got a hold of my buddies, and put them in the horse and buggy, which they drove in those days, to take them around and have them show them where I was hiding.

SYATT: HA, HA.

HOWARD: Well, I had some old clothes stashed away down by the waterfront, you know, on the beach—I lived right near the water—and my friends would take them everywhere except where I was. They'd take them down to the beach and say, "Well, here's his clothes, he must be swimming around here somewhere."

SYATT: HA, HA.

HOWARD: And then they used to send postcards to my house, that said, "Your son has been absent from school so many days. Please answer this card and tell us the reason why." Well, I used to wait for the postman and grab that card, and I'd put on there that, uh, "Moe's grandmother was ill and he was taking care of her", and I signed my father's name.

I graduated grade school in our area, that was the eighth year—You see, there was no junior high schools—and went right from the eighth grade into high school. You'd spend eight years in the school—

SYATT: RIGHT.

HOWARD: —in the grade school, and then go four years into the high school. Well I went to high school, Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn on Flatbush Avenue, uh, for one month. And then, I just couldn't tolerate it anymore.

SYATT: WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS, MOE, AND YOUR FAMILY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

HOWARD: I never had any sisters. There were five boys. And my parents, none of them were ever in show business of any kind. In fact, my mother thought that actors were not a nice group of people.

SYATT: MOE, TELL US ABOUT THE FORMATION OF THE THREE STOOGES AND JUST HOW THAT CAME ABOUT.

HOWARD: When I was a little boy, there was a fella called TED HEALY, who came out of a town called Kaufman, Texas, outside of Houston. And I lived right on the waterfront, and there were some very fine cottages there, so Ted Healy and his mother used to live there for the summer. And I met this young fella, he was very clever, and later

on, many years later, he got to go into show business, and he asked me if I'd join him.

So it was Ted Healy and I from 1921 to 1923, at which time we got a hold of my brother Shemp. Shemp was my older brother. So it became Ted, Moe, and Shemp.

In 1925, we were appearing in a Broadway show, a Shubert show, and we happened to have a week off, so we went into the Marigold Gardens in Chicago and saw this fellow with a high hat and tails, uh, doing a Russian dance and playing a violin at the same time. He looked pretty cute, so Ted Healy looked at me and said, "Hey, Moe, you thinking what I'm thinking?" I said, "Yeah. Let's go back and talk to the guy."

So, he finished the rest of the show and went back to the dressing room, and here is this fella with a robe on, he had just wet his hair, and while we we're talking to him his hair was drying—it curled up like a porcupine.

SYATT: HA, HA.

HOWARD: As it was drying it dried into curls, you know. And that was Larry. That was 1925.

SYATT: AND THAT'S HOW YOU GOT THE NAME FOR HIM IN A LOT OF THE FILMS?

HOWARD: Oh, I called him porcupine, I called him all kinds of names. Anyhow, that was the birth of the three. It was Moe, Shemp, and Larry.

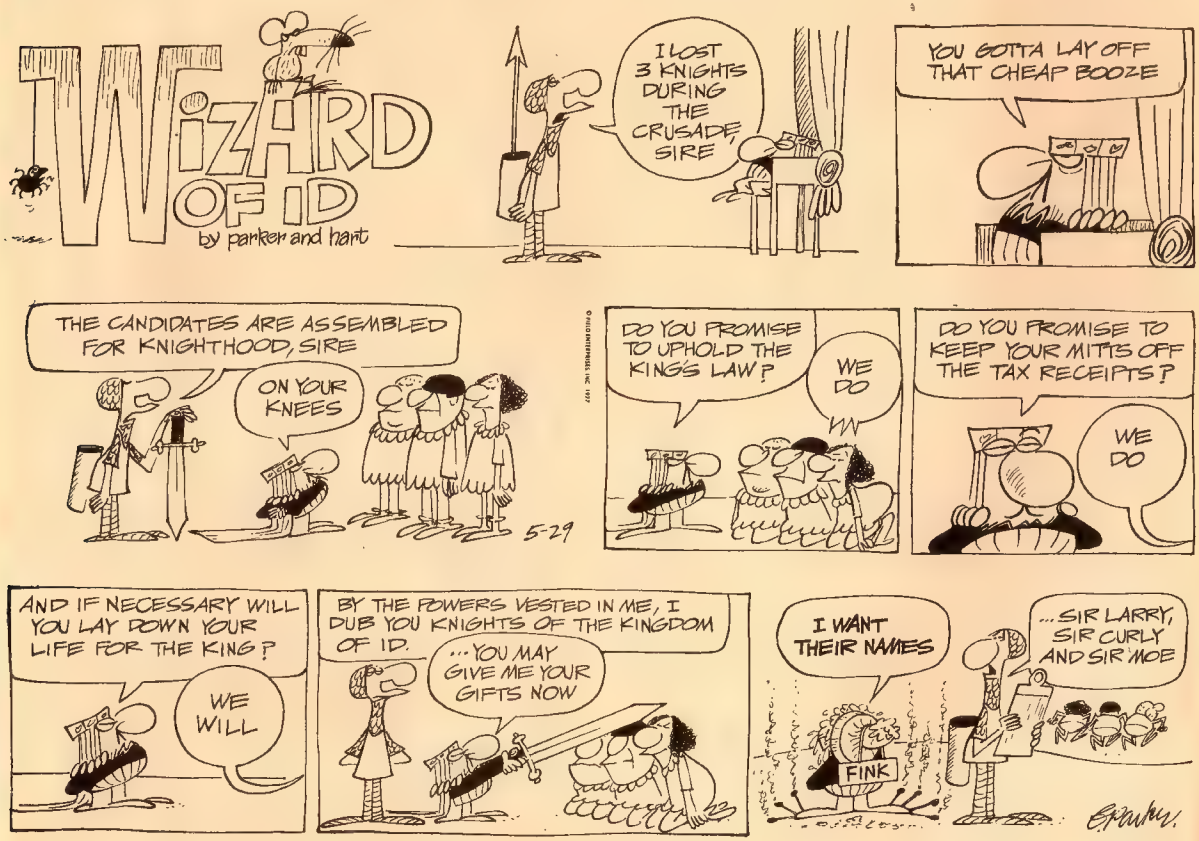
Up until 1931 we played vaudeville, and in '32 Shemp got the opportunity to play the character, Knobby, in the JOE PALOOKA pictures. He was reluctant about going. He said, "Well, who are you going to get for the third guy?" I said, "Listen Shemp, you go get your opportunity, we'll take the kid brother, Curly," who was Jerry. We called him 'Babe' amongst the family, because he was the youngest of five brothers.

SYATT: RIGHT.

HOWARD: So, we got Curly, who was working with Orville Knapp and his band, as a comedy guest conductor. We told him to give in his two weeks notice and join with us. So, in 1932, Curly joined with us. Curly, I, and Larry. That lasted and we were under contract to MGM first, for a year, in 1933. Then in 1934 we signed the longest contract that any players had in any studio—24 straight years, no options—at Columbia Pictures from 1934 to January 15, 1958.

SYATT: RIGHT.

HOWARD: But in 1946, Curly had a stroke, right


WIZARD OF ID
by parker and hart
I LOST 3 KNIGHTS DURING THE CRUSADE, SIRE
YOU GOTTA LAY OFF THAT CHEAP BOOZE
THE CANDIDATES ARE ASSEMBLED FOR KNIGHTHOOD, SIRE
ON YOUR KNEES
5-29
DO YOU PROMISE TO UPHOLD THE KING'S LAW?
WE DO
DO YOU PROMISE TO KEEP YOUR MITTS OFF THE TAX RECEIPTS?
WE DO
AND IF NECESSARY WILL YOU LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE FOR THE KING?
WE WILL
BY THE POWERS VESTED IN ME, I DUB YOU KNIGHTS OF THE KINGDOM OF ID.
...YOU MAY GIVE ME YOUR GIFTS NOW
I WANT THEIR NAMES
FINK
...SIR LARRY, SIR CURLY AND SIR MOE
WIZARD © FIELDS 1-30-74

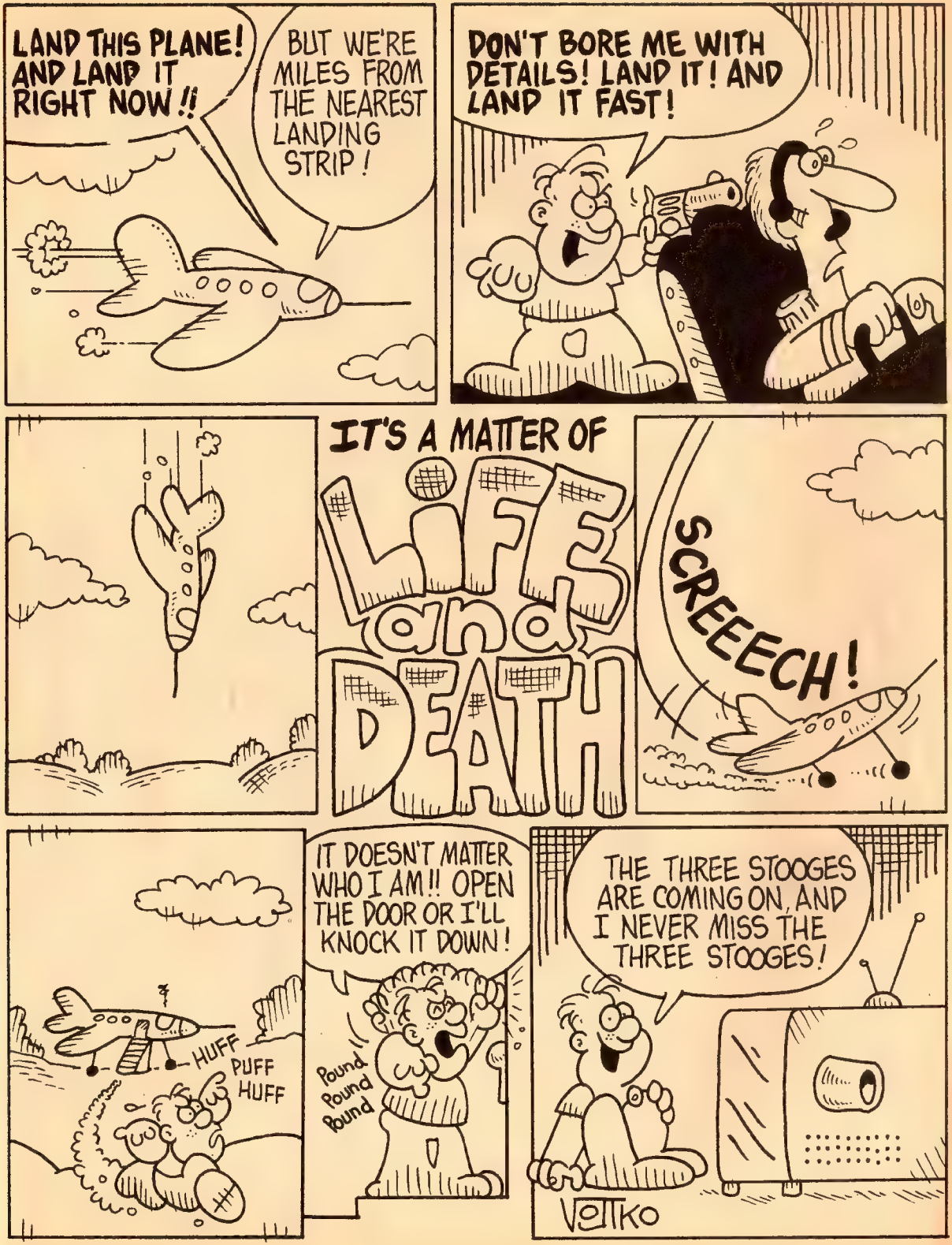
in the middle of a picture,
SYATT: WHILE YOU WERE FILMING?
HOWARD: Yes. We were filming a picture called HOI POLLOI (Note: I believe he meant HALF-WITS HOLIDAY, which was a remake of HOI POLLOI. HOI POLLOI was made in 1935.) which my wife wrote, incidentally.
SYATT: UH HUH...
HOWARD: He was sitting in his chair, and we called him to come in and do his scene, and he had a stroke in the chair.
SYATT: HMMM. (Sympathetically.)
HOWARD: So that was the end of his career, so Shemp came back in 1946. So it was Shemp, I, and Larry from 1946. Curly lingered for six years and passed away in 1952, and then Shemp passed away in 30 seconds in 1955. (Note: In November of 1955, Shemp suffered a heart attack in the back of a taxi while on the way to the boxing matches with some friends.)
SYATT: WHEN SHEMP CAME BACK, DID CURLY APPEAR IN ONE OR TWO AS A MAN WITH A BEARD?
HOWARD: We tried to build his morale a little bit so we had in a picture called, uh, HOLD THAT LION, on a train where we were running around and came to where we were looking for this fellow, and here is Curly asleep with a derby on and his face covered. We took this thing off and he had a clothes pin on his nose.
SYATT: RIGHT.
HOWARD: So we took it off and he started all kinds of snoring and stuff, so we put it back.
SYATT: RIGHT. (Chuckling.)
HOWARD: This improved his morale. Then in another picture where we had a restaurant, Curly was the chef. And then I went into the kitchen and he was taking his chef's apron off and his chef's hat off. I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going out to a restaurant to have lunch."
SYATT: HA, HA.
HOWARD: So, I mean, those were the two things. But it never worked out. We tried so hard to build up his morale and everything else.
SYATT: HMMM. (Sympathetically.)
HOWARD: But I'll tell you this, Curly, when he was out of commission in 1946, he was 43 years old.
SYATT: HMMM, JEEZ...
HOWARD: He lingered for six years he was 49. But in his 49 years he lived 112.
SYATT: THAT'S GREAT.
HOWARD: Because he had such a great life. I mean, uh, he just wandered and did and did, you know, and never saved his money, he spent, he gave—even Jackie Gleason, to this day, owes Curly about 250 bucks. This was when Jackie was broke. That's the continuity.

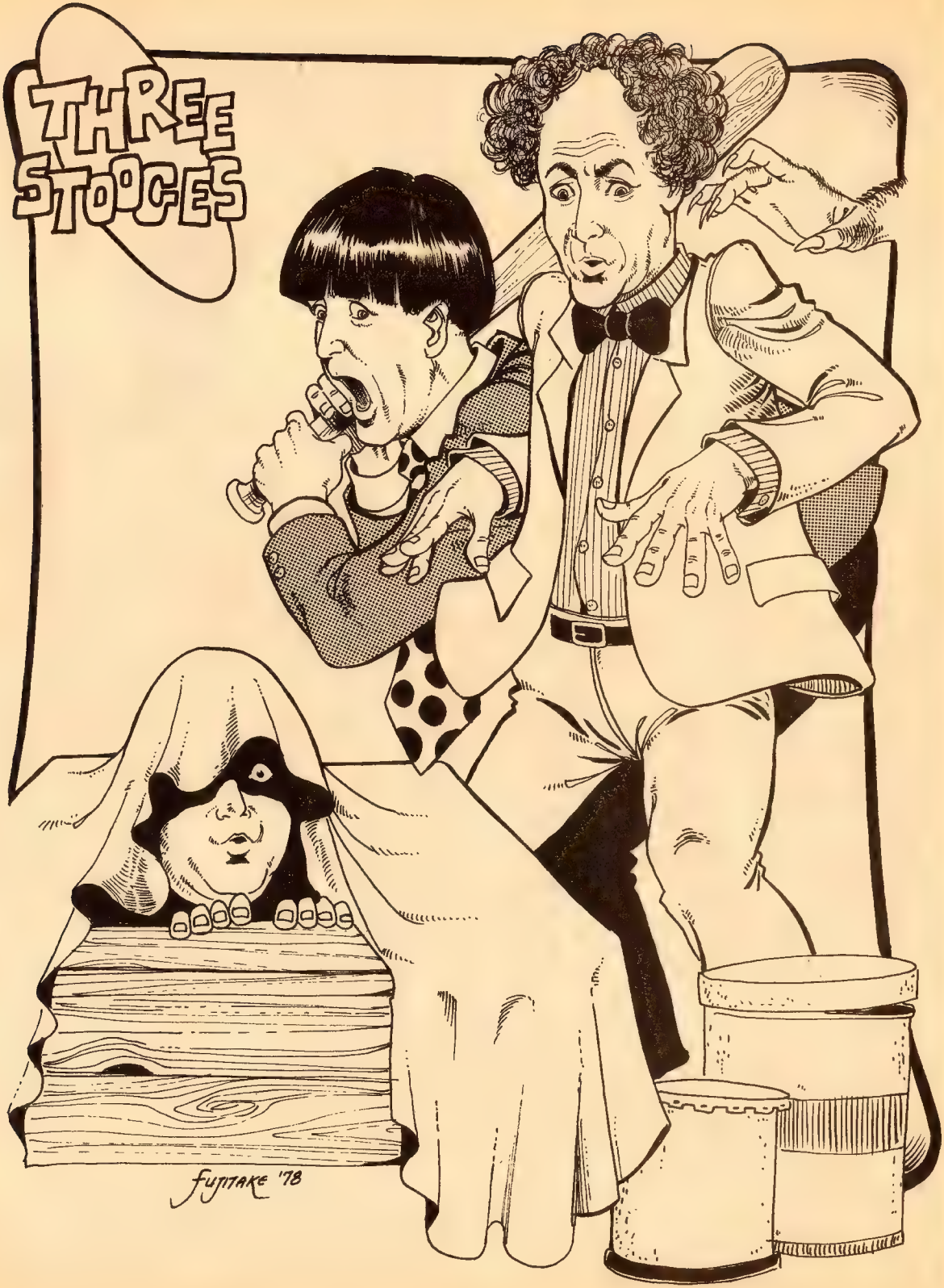
And then, uh, we went on through with the films at Columbia and in 1955 when Shemp passed away we still had two more years to go on the contract. So we got a hold of this fellow, JOE BESSER, which you've seen many times...
SYATT: RIGHT.
HOWARD: ...the fat, rollie-pollie guy who said, "Not so hard!"...
SYATT: RIGHT.
SYATT: RIGHT. (Laughing.)
HOWARD: ...like a little bald-headed sissy. And we finished the contract in early 1958 with JOE BESSER, and then we got hold of JOE De RITA, who came out of burlesque. We tried to get him before, but he was under contract to the Minsky people.

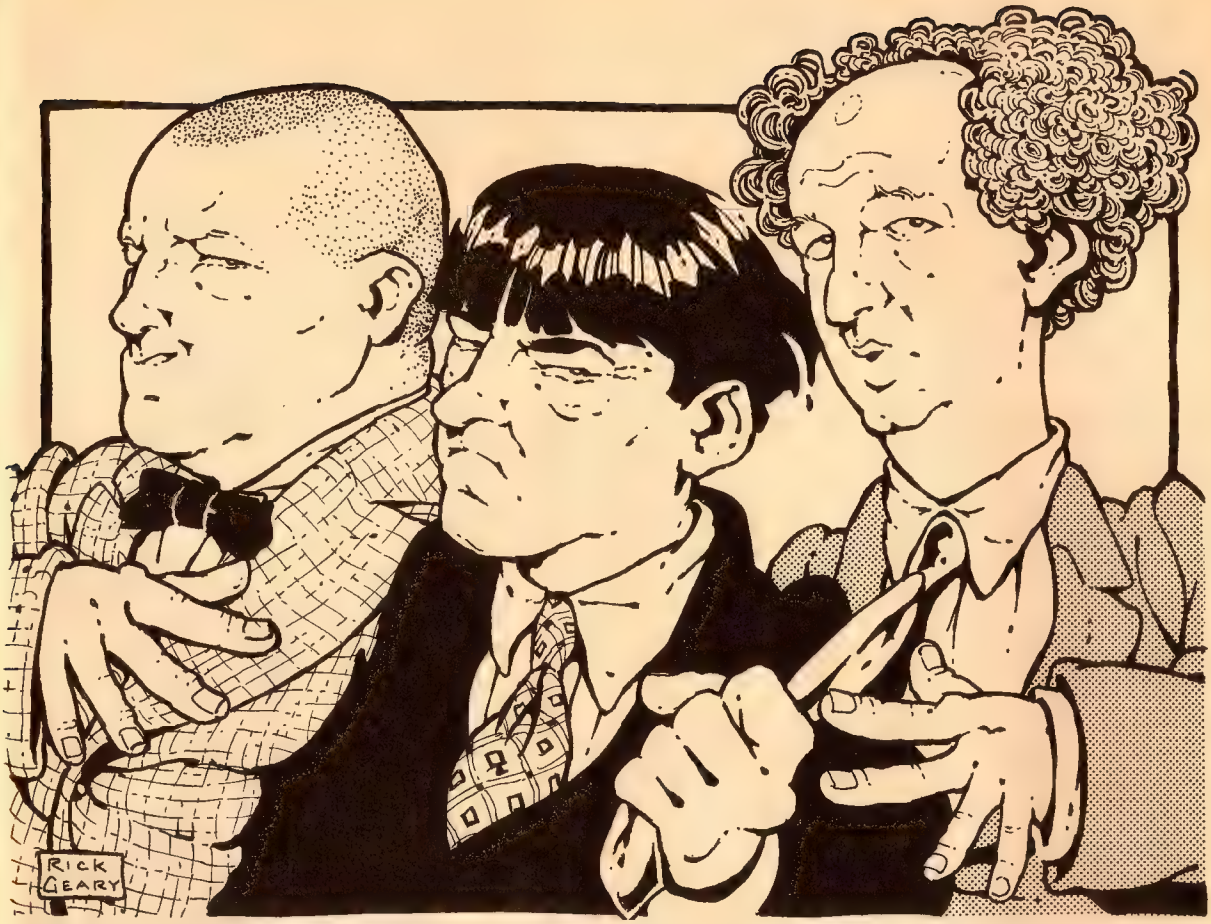
So in 1958 we got Joe De Rita, and we called him Curly Joe. So, it was I, Larry, and Curly Joe. Then we did all the features; HAVE ROCKET WILL TRAVEL, STOP, LOOK AND LAUGH, SNOW WHITE AND THE THREE STOOGES, THREE STOOGES MEET HERCULES, THREE STOOGES IN ORBIT, AROUND THE WORLD IN A DAZE, THE OUTLAW IS COMING, and I say that went through the features with Curly Joe.

Then we did a picture on our own, independently. We produced a picture called KOOK'S TOUR . We had finished that hour and a half picture, not completely edited, and we need some more things, but at the end of the picture, Larry had a stroke.

So I work alone. I've been in several colleges, I've been in theaters around Philadelphia, and, uh, I keep in action, because I can't just sit down and look at four walls, you know.
SYATT: THAT'S GREAT. CAN I CROSS MY FINGERS AND HOPE YOU'LL TELL ME HOW OLD YOU ARE NOW?
HOWARD: I certainly would. I'd be proud of it. I'm on my way to 77.
SYATT: OH, THAT'S GREAT. FOR THOSE WHO ARE LISTENING WHO ARE IN-


LAND THIS PLANE! AND LAND IT RIGHT NOW!!
BUT WE'RE MILES FROM THE NEAREST LANDING STRIP!
DON'T BORE ME WITH DETAILS! LAND IT! AND LAND IT FAST!
IT'S A MATTER OF
LIFE and DEATH
SCREEECH!
HUFF
PUFF
HUFF
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO I AM!! OPEN THE DOOR OR I'LL KNOCK IT DOWN!
Pound Pound Pound
THE THREE STOOGES ARE COMING ON, AND I NEVER MISS THE THREE STOOGES!
Voltko


THREE STOOGES
FUJITAKE '78



TERESTED IN ASTROLOGY, WHAT SIGN ARE YOU?
HOWARD: Ha, ha, ha... I don't know a thing about my sign.
SYATT: WHAT MONTH OF THE YEAR?
HOWARD: Oh, I was born on June the 19th, 1897.
SYATT: WHAT WAS YOUR THEME SONG FOR THE MOVIES AND THE SHORTS?
HOWARD: Oh, I don't know, we used a couple of them. One was THREE BLIND MICE. That didn't intrique me very much. But the thing that did was a little song we had in one of the pictures called, uh, VIOLENT IS THE WORD FOR CURLY, where we sang that song with the consonants against the vowels. You ever hear it? (Moe sings parts of it.) (Note: I believe this part was cut from the television version of this short.) Yeah, it's a very cute song, and it wasn't too much of a problem to write it. We wrote it with CHARLEY CHASE, who directed that picture.
SYATT: THAT WAS ABOUT COLLEGE, WASN'T IT? YOU WERE PROFESSORS?
HOWARD: Yeah, we were supposed to be college professors. Ha, Ha.
SYATT: CAN YOU RECALL ONE OR TWO FUNNY THINGS THAT HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE FILMING, THAT MAYBE NEVER EVEN MADE THE SHORTS, OR MAYBE DID BUT YOU WEREN'T PLANNING IT?
HOWARD: Well, the one thing that happened in that one particular picture—you know, originally we were gasoline attendants.
SYATT: IN REAL LIFE?
HOWARD: No, no, in that picture, VIOLENT IS THE WORD FOR CURLY.
SYATT: OH YEAH, RIGHT.
HOWARD: So, it showed us in the gas station and we'd give them good service. We'd, uh, by mistake we'd put popcorn in their radiator, and all kinds of crazy things—we used to polish the customer's head with a cloth...
SYATT: HA, HA.
HOWARD: And we finally got out of there in a

chase and jumped into an ice cream truck. And Curly got into the part that said the freezer. And we finally stopped, the suitcases we had belonged to these professors, you know, that were supposed to be at the college.

SYATT: RIGHT.

HOWARD: So Curly got frozen up, and we took him in the woods and put him on a spit, and put a fire under him, you know, we turned him around like a big wheel and he tied to a log. So, ha, ha, the rope broke on the log and he fell head first right into the fire. It took five of us to drag him out of the thing.

SYATT: HA, HA. HOW DID HE TAKE IT? DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT HIS REACTION WAS TO IT?

HOWARD: Nothing. Curly never had any bad reactions to anything. He took everything with a laugh.

SYATT: OH, THAT'S GREAT.

HOWARD: One remark he made, he says, "You know, I almost got a haircut without a barber."

SYATT: HA, HA. DID HE ALWAYS KEEP HIS HAIR THE SAME STYLE ALL THE WAY THROUGH HIS CAREER?

HOWARD: Yes. Curly, even as a young lad had a certain spark about him, a very, very creative spark.

You know, he was a hard study. And if he forgot words during the scene, there was no telling what he would do. One time he'd fall to the floor and spin around like a top, until he'd remember what he had to say, or he'd lay on his back and roll along the floor like a snake. All these things used to break us up, completely, because we never knew what he was going to do, or when he was stuck for a line, you see.

SYATT: JUST WHO WROTE THE MATERIAL FOR THE FILMS AND SHORT SUBJECTS YOU MADE?

HOWARD: We wrote the treatments. Because nobody understood us. Nobody knew what we were all about. So we wrote the treatments, and we had a formula, which was the upsetting of dignity. In other words, if we were going to do a picture which was basically in society, we'd open up as rubbish collectors. So anything we did in society was excusable, because what did rubbish collectors know about society? And this was the formula we used all the way around.

If you take a fella with a high hat and tails and a monocle and spats, and you smashed him in the face with a pie, the people loved that, because it brought him down to their level. And that was the upsetting of dignity.

We had a very planned way of working. If I say so myself, I don't think there was anybody in the entire industry that had any better timing, comedy timing, than we did.

SYATT: AND ESPECIALLY THE SOUND EFFECTS THAT WENT WHEN YOU HIT CURLY ON THE HEAD— DID THE SAME TEAM KIND OF WORK THROUGHOUT MANY OF THE YEARS IN THE FILMING? THEY WERE SO PERFECT.

HOWARD: The director was the one who supervised the sound effects.

SYATT: AND THOSE WERE DUBBED IN AFTERWARDS?

EGGS
TIM
FULLER

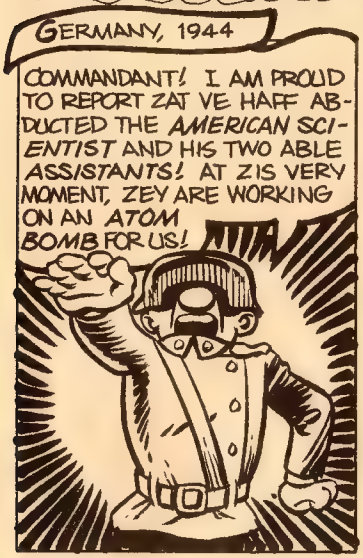
HOWARD: Oh yes, they were dubbed in, seperately, and then coordinated into the soundtrack.
SYATT: WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE TO WORK WITH IN THE YEARS THAT YOU WERE WITH THE THREE STOOGES, AS FAR AS SHEMP, LARRY, OR CURLY?
HOWARD: Oh, well, first of all, Curly and Shemp were two different types. Shemp was a deadpan comedian. He worked on his own many times before he joined us. He did a picture with W.C. FIELDS called BANK DICK—he must have been in a dozen features with ABBOTT & COSTELLO, OLSEN & JOHNSON—he did many things on his own until the time we called him when Curly got sick.

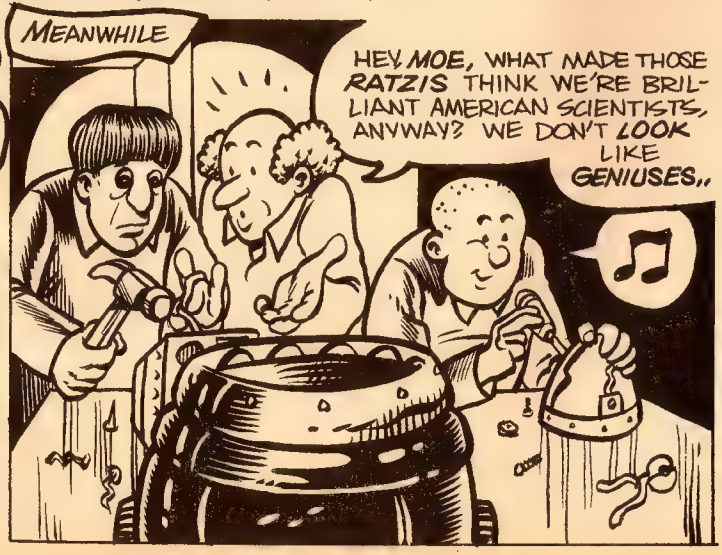
So Shemp was a different type. He went through a picture one time, an hour and forty-five minute picture at MGM, and never spoke a work and got a million laughs.
SYATT: THAT'S A TRUE COMEDIAN WHO CAN DO THAT.
HOWARD: Yes. You can see now, there's a difference between a comic and a comedian. And let me tell you what that difference is.

You know, Bob Hope is a comedian. Johnny Carson is a comedian. Dick Cavett is a comedian. A comedian is one who has the material written for him, but has the wonderful personality of delivery. You look at the credits and you'll find that one guy has nine writers, the other guy has seven writers, and one guy has ten writers. But they are blessed with a certain personality that can deliver. But a comic can take something that isn't funny and make it funny. And that's what Curly was. Curly was a comic, while the others were comedians.
SYATT: I THINK THE WHOLE TEAM WAS A TEAM OF COMICS.
HOWARD: Well, you see, there are certain roles. I was a guy who was a bully. I tried to tell them how to do things, and I didn't know half as much as they did about doing them. Larry was the pest that got in my way all the time. Curly was the guy I took revenge on, you know. I'd smack him, I'd poke him, I'd do everything, and all he did was come up toward me and look me in my face and go (Moe makes a sound like Curly would); that was the extent of the retaliation. If he wanted to, he could have hit me with one fist and knocked me cold, but that wasn't his character.
SYATT: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OR FAVORITE SHORT THAT YOU WERE IN?
HOWARD: I'd say that one of the best ones, uh, let's see, well one that I enjoyed doing was where I did the two pictures where I played the parts of Hitler...
SYATT: UH HUH, I REMEMBER.
HOWARD: ...YOU NAZTY SPY and I'LL NEVER HEIL AGAIN. And the one called, uh, I forget the name of that one, where we were in a radio station and Curly played the part of a woman.
SYATT: OH YEAH, RIGHT. WAS THAT THE SAME ONE WHERE YOU WENT TO SOMEBODY'S HOUSE AND ENTERTAINED?
HOWARD: That's right. The woman came and hired us. I'll tell you the name of that film—(trying to remember)—uh, oh well, I've thought of it so many times. That's one of the good ones. (The title he was trying to remember was MICROPHONIES.)

Then, of course, we had MEN IN BLACK, which was nominated for an Academy Award. It was a burlesque on MEN IN WHITE, which MGM made, which won an Academy Award.
SYATT: HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO FILM ONE COMEDY?
HOWARD: Three days.
SYATT: THREE DAYS? (Amazed.) THAT WAS AFTER IT WAS WRITTEN?
HOWARD: Yes. We never rehersed.
SYATT: NO?
HOWARD: No, because if you went through it rehersing you'd be dried up by the time you went to shoot the film.

THE 3 STOOGES in NUCLEAR KNUCKLE-HEADS


GERMANY, 1944
COMMANDANT! I AM PROUD TO REPORT ZAT VE HAFF ABDUCTED THE AMERICAN SCIENTIST AND HIS TWO ABLE ASSISTANTS! AT ZIS VERY MOMENT, ZEY ARE WORKING ON AN ATOM BOMB FOR US!



SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, PORCUPINE!
BUT, MOE, LARRY'S RIGHT. WE'RE JUST SONG AND DANCE MEN IN A U.S.O. SHOW„
SLAP!
WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ATOM BOMBS?
NUTHIN'! BUT WE CAN'T LET THOSE GERMAN SKUNKS KNOW THAT! THEY'D KILL US SURE! HERE, PUMPKIN HEAD, I WANT YOU TO TAP THE END OF THIS SCREWDRIVER„
NOW JUST TAP IT, AND YOW-W!
OH„,
WHY, YOU AMOEBA BRAIN! I'LL MURDER YA! I'LL„I'LL
MOE, PLEASE DON'T! I DIDN'T MEAN IT„ THERE'S AN EXPLANATION!!
I'LL CHAIN-SAW YOU IN HALF IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!
MOE„ DON'T!
WOO WOO WOO-WOO WOO!
GRRRR
HIT ME IN THE HEAD WITH A HAMMER, EH? DOES MY HEAD LOOK LIKE A NAIL TO YOU?
MOE, PLEASE! REMEMBER— YOUR MOTHER AND MY MOTHER ARE BOTH MOTHERS!
MOE„ DON'T!
HOW D'YA LIKE „THAT?
YAAA!
RZAR!

NOW ENOUGH MONKEY BUSINESS, YOU GUYS! WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO, OR WE'RE DEAD MEAT!
Y'MEAN WE'VE REALLY GOT TO MAKE THIS OVERGROWN FIRE-CRACKER WORK?
NO, WE'LL JUST MAKE IT LOOK LIKE AN ATOM BOMB, THEN USE IT AS A PAPER-WEIGHT, IDIOT!
BUT WHAT IF WE CAN'T GET IT TO WORK?
WE'VE GOT TO! IF WE DON'T, THOSE KRAUT COCKROACHES WILL KNOW WE'RE NOT SUPER-BRAINIACS AND SHOOT US ON SIGHT!
IT IS TOO LATE, IMPOSTERS! ZO! YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD FOOL ME, DID YOU? VELL, AS YOU SAY IN AMERICA, YOU CAN FOOL SOME OF ZE PEOPLE ALL OF ZE TIME AND ALL OF ZE PEOPLE SOME OF ZE TIME BUT YOU CAN'T FOOL A GERMAN SOLDIER!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, PUS-PUSS! NOW, CURLY!
BULLS-EYE!
HA HA!
OOPS
CHOP
ZO! YOU VANT TO PLAY ROUGH, DO YOU?
OWW!
-YOU CAN'T BLOW MY FRIEND'S BRAINS OUT'N GET AWAY WITH IT! ONLY I CAN DO THAT!
POW!
HEY, PAL, YOUR SHOE'S UNTIED!
OH, REALLY?
UGH!
TAKE THAT, PUDDING HEAD!
SPLAK

I VILL KILL YOU VITHIN AN INCH OF YOUR LIFE OR MY SUPERIOR VILL KILL ME!
WAIT A MINUTE! TELEPHONE!!
IT'S FOR YOU!
IT'S THE ELECTRIC COMPANY, CALLING ABOUT YOUR OVER-DUE LIGHT BILL!
CLICK!
DANGER HIGH VOLTS
OH! HELLO,,
YAAE!
SPAZZ
WHY, YOU—! YOU WON'T GET ME, YOU FESTERING SHISH-KA-BOB!
EH?
?
JUJU
TAKE A BITE OF THIS PINEAPPLE!
NHUG!
GAH
HENH, HENH!
BLAKOW
WELL, I GUESS WE SHOWED THEM, EH, FELLAS?
HEH HEH WE SURE DID! WE MIGHT EVEN GET MEDALS FOR THIS!
YEAH! WE PRACTICALLY WON THE WAR SINGLE-HANDEDLY!
DANGER ATOM BOM
BOOM
STORY BY MARK BURBEY
PENCILS BY GRASS GREEN
INKS BY EDDIE EDDINGS

Starring WILLIAM SHATNER LEONARD NIMOY DeFOREST KELLEY Co-starring JAMES DOOHAN WALTER KOENIG GEORGE TAKEI NICHELLE NICHOLS also Starring BIBI BESCH

Based on STAR TREK Created by GENE RODDENBERRY Executive Producer HARVE BENNETT

Produced by ROBERT SALLIN Directed by NICHOLAS MEYER

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DOLBY STEREO IN SELECTED THEATRES A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

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THE FUTURE IS NOW EVEN MORE FANTASTIC
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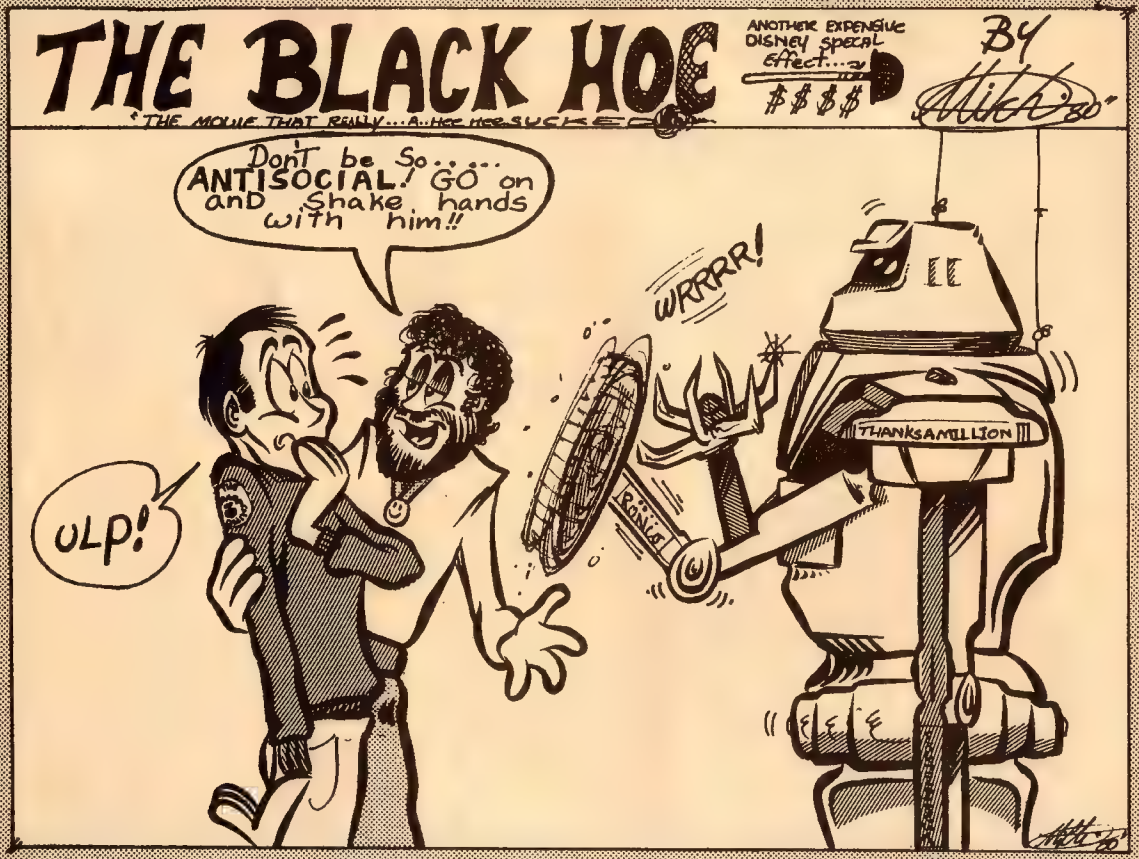
Beyond the edge of space there exists a world beyond time...

STARLOG

JUNE 1983
Number 72
THE MAGAZINE FROM THE FUTURE



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MONSTER INVASION

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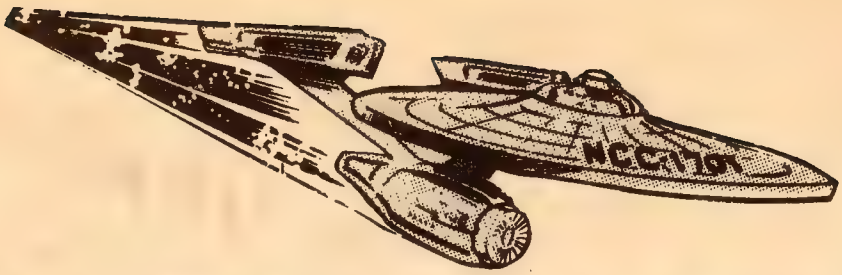

ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS

ENTERPRISE INCIDENTS is where the Star Trek fan can journey to have his wildest dreams fulfilled. *EI* is now in its fifth year of publication and has now hit a regular quarterly schedule. Being so close to Los Angeles, it is the only major ST zine with access to the personalities and artists responsible for the continuing ST saga as evidenced by our early reports on the film and our recent interviews with Dorothy Fontana and Greg Jein. Future issues will include a spectacular feature on the designs and props done for *ST:TMP* by *Brick Price 'Miniatures* (who built the ships for *Project: UFO* and other shows) as well as an article by Dorothy Fontana on her Star Trek animated episode, "Yesteryear" with special artwork accompanying it done especially for *EI* by Ron Wilber.

EI also covers the world of fan fiction and it examines not only the trends in this sub-genre and reviews the best work available, but it also presents its own ST fiction to help fill the demand by fans who feel cheated by the juvenilia published by Bantam Books. In fact, *EI #9* has an exhaustive article reviewing all of the Bantam Star Trek novels and we pull no punches in our critical study of these less than talented exercises.

Enterprise Incidents is written by Star Trek fans for Star Trek fans. It goes out of its way to find features that no one else is doing and that the editors want very much to see themselves. They love Star Trek and their enthusiasm shows because they want to be just as excited by each issue as the reader, and they're tough to please!

EI has many regular features such as "The Star Trek Archives" (which features reprints of ST oriented articles from the past and from abroad), "The Star Trek Bloopers" (Over eighty blooper photos have been published since *EI #2* and more are being found all the time!) plus cartoons and other artwork. No matter what you might think, *EI* has no trouble coming up with interesting and imaginative features!

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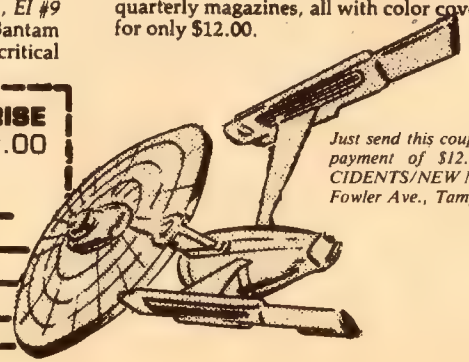

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DEPOSITS

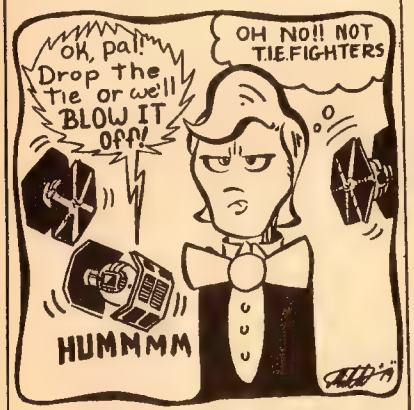
THE REVENGE OF THE FANS

...I couldn't believe it! I reeled out of the theatre shocked and stunned! Just because *The Revenge of the Jedi* was the end of a trilogy, did it have to be the end of my favorite characters? Did Han Solo have to sacrifice his life to save Luke? Couldn't they have found another way? Did Lando have to die in the crash of the *Millenium Falcon*? It's all too much. How could George Lucas do such a thing to the fans??!!

Arthur Brown
90 Dexter Street
Tonawanda, New York 14150

...Shock...disbelief...dyspepsia...First Spock and now this...

Kevin Gentry
599 Jefferson
Lake Charles, La. 70601



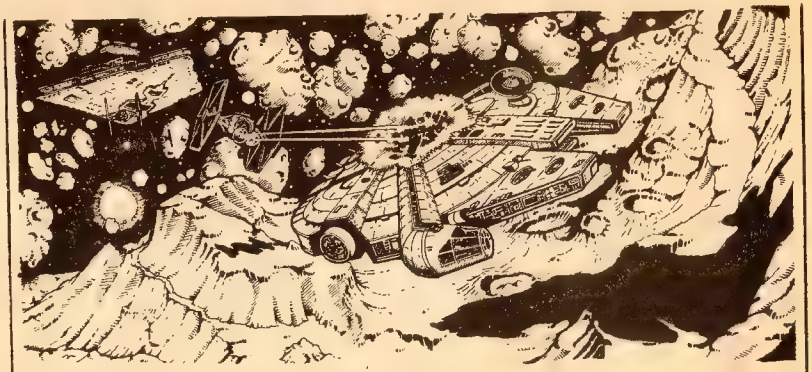
...I think that there were two version of *Revenge Of the Jedi* completed, a thrilling one and a silly one. The day before the preimiere, the theatre managers watched them both and decided to show the silly one.

John Turek
4777 Lantana Dr.
San Diego, Ca. 92105

...So now Luke has Leia, but who does Chewie have?

Marc Wielage
P.O. Box 480315
Los Angeles, Ca. 90048

...Maybe having Diana Rigg as Luke's mother was a terrific idea, but that doesn't make up for killing off Han Solo in such a heartless manner. First, we're left biting our nails at the end of *Empire*, and then we see Han rescued safe and sound only to die so tragically. What will this do to the sales of all the Han Solo novels by Brian Dailey? Who will I dress up as at conventions from now on?



Dorothy Fontana
Studio City, Ca. 91604

...He plummets through the carpet of eternity,

Green lightning burns the sky.

I watch in helpless awe.

The dark one reaches. A frigid embrace.

I stand alone without you. Here I wait. Tomorrow more rain will fall.

Wendy Rathbone
4051 Kenosha Ave.
San Diego, Ca. 92126

...I haven't been this depressed since they cancelled *Charlie's Angels*.

Ken Mitchroney
1119 North D Street
Lake Worth, Fla. 33460

...Well it's about frigging time Han Solo met his just desserts! Don't get me wrong, I like Harrison Ford (although I think he was better in *Raiders* and *Blade Runner* than he ever was in *Star Wars*), but this Han Solo nonsense just had to go. Between the femfans at conventions running around buying Han Solo photos and giggling over their prizes, and the fanzines filled to overflowing with Han Solo foldouts and transcriptions of his misbegotten exploits, my gorge had risen to overflowing! Maybe now the 'zines can get back to some serious writing about *Star Trek* and forget this *Star Wars* drivel. Keep it on the screen and away from my 'zines!

Leslie Fish
1814 N. Howe, Apt. #2
Chicago, Ill. 60614

CORE-MEN

...I want to express my appreciation to you for your special issue devoted to Roger Corman. After the leaps forward he has made in the genre with *Battle Beyond the Stars* and *Galaxy Of Terror*, it's clear that he's bucking for the mantle held by George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. I'm really looking forward to his team-up with Jerry Lewis on their planned *Day The Earth Stood Still* remake.

Mark Cantrell
Rt. 5, Box 2460
Okeechobee, Fla. 33472

...Thanks for the inside (and I do mean *inside*) look at *Galaxy of Terror*. Learning the technique which made Erin Moran's body-exploding scene look so terrific was of immense interest to me, especially the full color frame-by-frame blow-ups (no pun

intended—yark!). I was especially intrigued by the method used to make a gushing, severed arm look so real without the old Karo Syrup routine. Gosh, they must have had the slaughterhouse working overtime to get all that calves blood, and I thought it was really funny when they told about filling up an indoor pool with all that leftover gook, turning on the heat and going for a swim! Yum, I wish I could have been there!! For sure!!!

Gerry Gendlin
16900 Parthenia
Sepulveda, Ca. 91343

HARRIED RAY

...Boy, you guys really get the scoops! Ray Harrayhausen starring Mr. Bill in *SINBAD GOES TO MARS*! But after seeing *CLASH OF THE TITANS* I can certainly believe it.

Nicholas Dyshuk, Jr.
9750 N.W. 15 Court
Pembroke Pines, Fla. 33024

LOST AND FOUND

...I want to thank you for your penetrating piece on Billy Mumy and the now underway *Lost In Space* sequel which he has written and is directing. Many people have consistently derided this series and overlooked its paramount potential for the serious exploration of social issues and other dilemmas confronting our day to day existence. That the story will take place many years after the series ended must go without saying, but I was especially pleased to read that it will be treated as a straight drama dealing with compelling issues, especially Dr. Smith's deep emotional bond with the robot and his sorrow that Will is no longer a young boy. I expect that this will really be something else!

Dennis Fischer
500 Landfair
Los Angeles, Ca. 90024 ★

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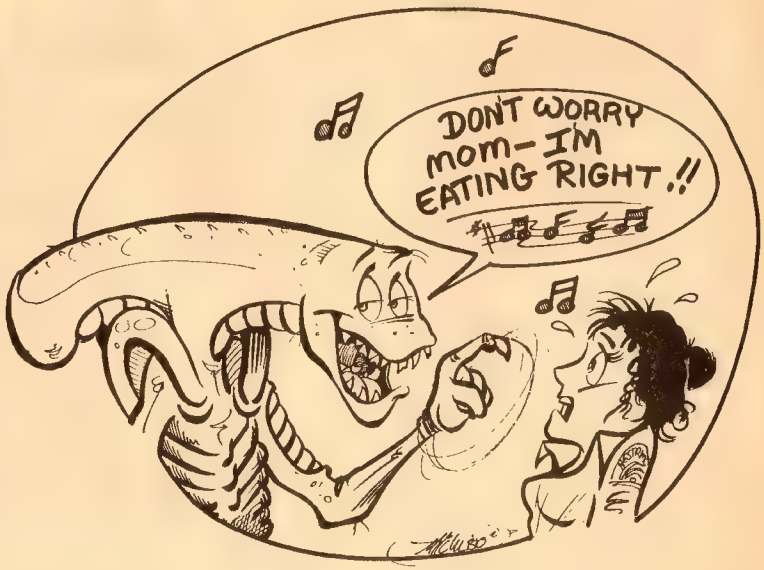


SPACE: 1999

THE MOTION PICTURE!

By JAMES VAN HISE

Gerry and Sylvia Anderson have announced this week that not only have they reconciled the differences that led to their divorce several years ago, but they have acquired the financial backing to embark on their largest enterprise, a forty million dollar revival of the mid-Seventies teleseries, *Space: 1999*, as a theatrical motion picture. "The fans want it," Gerry explained, "and just because the series garnered nothing but bad reviews and the major American networks turned their nose up at it and forced it to go the syndication route, we still think there's an audience for it. I think that all those people who wouldn't watch it on teevee will be more than happy to cough up five bucks a head to see it in the theatres. After all, this will be much different from the series. It'll be on a larger screen—except in the plex theatres..."

In another stunning move, it was announced that Harlan Ellison will script the movie. Said Harlan, "All right, so I didn't like the series when it came out, but it grew on me; sorta' like fungus. I mean, if I can like *DR. Who* with its rampant sexism and $1.98 an episode budget, why shouldn't I come around to this? Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself. I'm huge; I contain multitudes. Walt Whitman said that, not about *Space: 1999*, though. I don't know what old Walt would have thought of old *Space*, and another thing..."

The entire original cast has been gathered for the revival. Said Martin Landau, "Thank God for miracles. I'd been reduced to doing junk for Filmways like *It Came Without Warning* where I couldn't even wear my

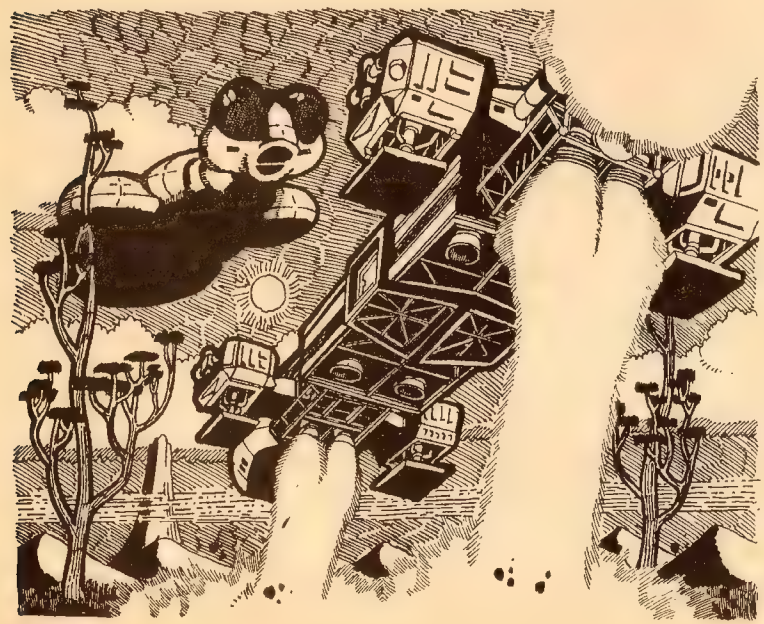
toupee'. I played a shellshocked Vietnam vet in that one; really chewed up the scenery. Can you believe me as a Vietnam vet? About as much as I believed Larry Storch as a cub scout leader. Did you see that movie? You did? So *you're* the one!"

The producers have gone over the old series prospectus with a fine-tooth comb to clear out the inconsistencies which caused so much trouble before. For instance, Maya will no longer be able to change into Earth animals which she could never have seen; an Eagle will not blow up every ten minutes; the origin will be changed in that it has been pointed out that the explosive force necessary to hurl the moon out of orbit would have also fractured it into many asteroid-sized chunks, so Alpha will now be on one of those

chunks. They will not be trying to return to Earth since it will be clear that the destruction of the moon caused tidal forces which also wiped out all life on Earth. The reason they encountered so many planets in the series is that they went through a time warp, otherwise it would have taken several years just to pass the orbit of Pluto. It will also be shown that beneath Moonbase Alpha is a General Motors assembly plant turning out Eagles to meet their inexhaustible demand.

When contacted for remarks about his surpise backing of the venture, ex-Beatle George Harrison explained: "Hey, I backed the Monty Python pics, *Holy Grail* and *Life Of Brian*, as well as *Time Bandits*. I did it 'cause I think Python is hilarious and I'm doing it now because *Space: 1999* was the funniest sci-fi show ever done. I mean, they really did a great take-off on serious science fiction what with all those explosions and the hokey acting, and no one ever believing Commander Koenig when he was the only one who was right, not to mention the deliberate illiteracy when it came to using science. And satire! I still fall off me chair whenever I see the conclusion of part one of 'Bringers Of Wonder' when Commander Koenig is being raped by an alien monster. What's a tentacle or two between friends, ay what?"

Although many directors have been approached, including Stanley Kubrick, Robert Wise, George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott, Peter Bogdanovich (who said, "I was tempted. After all, I still have fond memories of my first film, *Return To the Planet of the Prehistoric Women*."), as well as Werner Herzog and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, the final choice of director is Nancy Walker, who recently directed the Village People in *Can't Stop the Music* and is better known to fans from her role as Rhoda's mother on the series, *Rhoda*. Glenn Larson will act as creative consultant. ★



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SPACE TURKEY

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LOS ANGELES

Tom Snyder talks with Glen Larson

By JAMES VAN HISE

Although we've featured interviews with Glenn Larson before, they were the typical sort of fluff where we didn't ask any hard questions and he got away saying things like, "I don't think that we're limited with *Galactica 1980*" and describing, unchallenged, how it was being turned into an imitation of *The Time Tunnel*, and the "limitless story possibilities" that presented. So when confronted with the concept of doing a hard-as-nails interview with the latest winner of the Irwin Allen Award for quality science fiction, who else could we turn to but Tom Snyder, fresh from his interview with Charles Manson. We were certain now that he had the experience for this interview. Tom agreed so long as we didn't edit his comments in order to preserve his inimitable interviewing style.

STARDOG: So tell me, Glenn, you've done a lot of successful shows; *The Hardy Boys, B.J. And The Bear, Sword Of Justice*. What brings you to sci-fi?

LARSON: Well, it's the trend; that is to say, I had an S.F. series back in the Sixties about all the smartest people on Earth leaving in a spaceship, sort of the reverse of *Battlestar Galactica*, but *Star Trek* wasn't getting the numbers then, but as soon as *Star Wars* went through the roof, everyone at the Network just about wet their pants and in the middle of the scramble I dusted off this old thing, stole John Dykstra from George Lucas and just did the best *Star Wars* rip-off that money could buy. I still remember people reading over my scripts and saying, "My God, if you could only write!"

STARDOG: How do you feel about using John Dykstra like that? I mean, he and George Lucas had a big falling out, he's not getting the work that other companies are, his company's not doing real well...I mean let's face it, the man is practically a bum and it's *your* fault, Glenn Larson.

LARSON: I can't take all the credit. After all, it was John who believed that he was really the one responsible for the success of *Star Wars* and that George would find out how badly he was needed after *The Empire Strikes Back* flopped. It's no wonder that John used his Oscar to bounce a Laser beam off of. I'm not kidding! There's a burn mark near the base where he tested a Laser and it worked too well.

STARDOG: Well, I can't say that I've seen that many episodes of *Battlestar: Ponderosa*, but I...

LARSON: That's *Battlestar: Galactica*.

STARDOG: What? Oh, I guess it's because Lorne Green is there...You know I really loved *Bonanza* back in the Sixties, what with all those creepy little indoor sets that look so hokey now. The biggest show in the Sixties and it's just bombing in syndication, not unlike your own show. Why, I remember reading that Bill Walker, a member of your story department, called up the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society to try and get a letter writing campaign started up to save *Battlestar: Galactica* the way the fans saved *Star Trek* for one more year in the Sixties, and the club responded that if they wrote to ABC that it would be to compliment the Network on its uncharacteristic good taste in cancelling the series.

LARSON: Is that a question? I thought it was psycho-babble. Tom, the fans just don't understand the pressure of network television. I've said that when the pilot was accepted that we had to go to production immediately with no time to stockpile scripts or devote the time to the writing that was required. I mean look at "The Gun On Ice Planet Zero." We got a lot of mileage out of a really dumb idea in that they had to knock out a super weapon on a planet so that the fleet could get through when realistically all they had to do was pass on the weapon's blind side or just divert around it completely. We tricked viewers into buying it as if it were a two-dimensional situation in a landlocked war rather than a whole 'nother thing with the manuuverability of space involved. In another episode we acted as if clones weren't human beings. We didn't know what we were talking about. If we'd had more time it wouldn't have degenerated into a Cylon battle of the week with fires burning in space in the Galactica's landing bay. It's all give and take. A fan tried to explain the flaws to one of my assistants on the set one day and he told her, and very rightly, that she just didn't understand science fiction.

STARDOG: That's all well and good, but how do you respond to the charges that the theme music that you wrote for *Battlestar: Galactica* is virtually identical to that used on the old Walter Cronkite series *The 21st Century*, with some parts just speeded up?

LARSON:

STARDOG: Speaking of old mujsic, I just love "The Kinky Kid's Parade." I remember it

was one of the first records I ever remember listening to. I went up into my grandmother's attic and listened to her old Voctrola in Kewanee, Wisconsin. And she had this old Victrola with all these old Bluebird Records and they only had grooves on one side, and the first record I ever played—I was five years old—was "The Kinky Kid's Parade." For years I could never find anyone who had ever heard of it until a gentleman sent me a tape of a sparkling piano rendition.

Glenn, I hear you sicced your dogs on a delivery man once who was bringing you a tape of one of your films, and that when he asked to use your phone to call his office you told him there was a pay phone down the road.

LARSON: Tom, I don't know how these wild stories get started. Besides, I didn't know who the guy was at first. I was a bit under the weather at the time.

STARDOG: Well frankly, Glenn, I am surprised. What kind of dogs are they?

LARSON: German Shepards. You'll have to come by some time and meet them. You don't have to call ahead, just show up.

STARDOG: You know, I've been criticized for not going to the heart of the pertinent issues, but damn it, I think my viewers know as little about my guests as I do and so I try to have us both find out things equally and as human beings. I don't want to ask all those deep questions. When I had Buckminster Fuller on, I wanted to know if he liked pizza. I think people relate to that.

LARSON: You would, Tom.

STARDOG: What about that thing, the Daggit, and Twiki, the robot on *Buck Rogers*; what the heck is that all about?

LARSON: There was no question but that we wanted everything to be completely different. We just let our imaginations go, and tried to come up with things that were different. There have been so many robots of all types and sizes and shapes and whatever, it's a challenge to find something different, but I think we have. Uniqueness was our main goal, finding something that would be different.

STARDOG: About the opening of the Buck Rogers movie. It had that pseudo-James Bond music and a girl crooning over the sleeping body of Gil Gerard. The whole scene smacked of necrophilia.

LARSON: Well....

STARDOG: You know, it's surprising how many people have been on my show and died; Alfred Hitchcock, John Lennon, Rona Barrett. But getting back to *Buck Rogers*, that show is a lot different from *Battlestar: Galactica* even if you did use a lot of the same sets, employed stock footage of rockets being fired down the long tubes, and the same special effects people so that there wasn't a dime's bit of difference in the looks of them. How do you perceive the show and what was your approach that made it different?

LARSON: There was a script for *Buck Rogers* before I came on the project, but it was a very square, cartoon-type approach. They took themselves too seriously. I would say that ours has adult appeal; sophistication. The easiest way I can describe it is really to say that if you were going to take Burt Reynolds and put him in a space movie, this is what you'd wind up with. It's a guy from now thrown into an environment 500 years in the future. This gives him an opportunity to use hip, flip, so-forth dialogue. Listen, in the end it all comes down to this...just *how* perceptive are we being? The reason I like Von Daniken so much is

that he doesn't say, "This is what happened," but, "This *might* have happened." That's what makes science fiction truly fascinating.

STARDOG: You know that Von Daniken started writing *Chariots Of The Gods* while he was in jail in Germany for art fraud. That reminds me, how is it that many of your shows have clearly been inspired by previous successes done by other creators? For instance, *Alias Smith And Jones* patterned after *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *B.J. And The Bear* patterned after *Smokey And The Bandit* and *Every Which Way But Loose*, and *Battlestar: Galactica* and *Buck Rogers* panting on the heels of *Star Wars*?

LARSON: I was story editor on *It Takes A Thief* back in the Sixties and everying I know I learned doing *Thief*.

Editor's note: If you think this interview is something, you ought to read the Glen Larson interviews in FANTASTIC FILMS (Feb. '79 and July '79), STARLOG #36 and EPIC ILLUSTRATED #2. Truth is stranger than fiction. ✱

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WHICH WILL SURVIVE?
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CREATED BY GLEN A. LARSON AND ROGER "TEX" GOOMPY
CAPT. WILL ROGERS

THE REVENGE OF THE JEDI

By James Van Hise

The shock waves are still rippling through fandom in the wake of the release of the long awaited third film in the *Star Wars* series. Who can forget the dramatic footage on the network newscasts of fans staggering from the theatres, tears streaming down their cheeks. Whether the film is truly great or not has become a point of bitter contention among fans, but one thing over which there is no debate is that it certainly held more than its share of surprises.

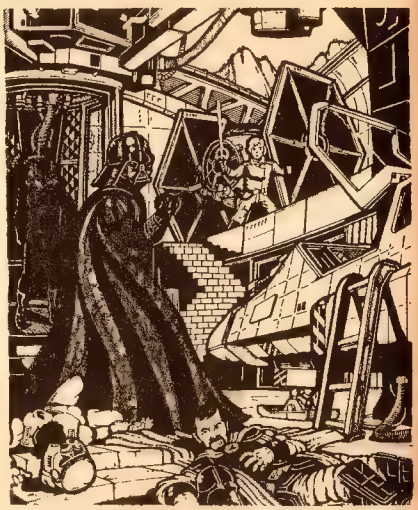
Viewers were led through the early part of the film with the usual *Star Wars* thrills and the introduction of Diana Rigg as Luke Skywalker's mother, the mysterious "other one" referred to by Yoda in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Her appearance is explained away quickly and is almost lost in the shuffle with the rescue of Han Solo. Alert viewers of *Empire* were rewarded for having partially guessed the rescue when they noticed Lando making a furtive adjustmenton the carbon freeze unit just before Han was hauled away in that block. Thus when Han awakens through a delayed action time release setting, Lando's loyalty is further demonstrated. This thus makes it all the more difficult to take when Lando leads the *Millenium Falcon* away from his friends as a decoy for the empire pursuers and dies when the *Falcon* crashes into an asteroid. Little did fans realize that this was just their first shock.

All of this just added to the uneasiness when Luke seemingly throws in with his father, Darth Vader, against the rebel alliance. It is during this outcast sequence that we're set up for the final big shock. The death of Han Solo. This has been dwelled on at length elsewhere, so suffice to say that this did not go down easy with the fans.

Even the death of the emporer at the hands of Darth Vader, and then Vader's demise at the hands of Luke Skywalker were not enough to remove the sting of Han solo's death. That the film was packed with astonishing surprises goes without saying, but debates are raging over whether these shocks violated the spirit established in the previous *Star Wars* films.

When reached for comment, George Lucas explained, "Right from the start, the *Star Wars* series has been incorrectly identified with *Star Trek*, patially due to a casting of interlocking characters as well as the optimism expressed in them. This is also, in a way, my fault because we consistenly referred to *Star Wars* as having been inspired by Flash Gordon. What the fans failed to distinguish was that *Star Trek* wasn't inspired by Flash Gordon so much as its roots were in *Forbidden Planet*, one of the main characters dies, and yet when it was hinted that Spock would die in the second feature, howls went up from fans all over the world. To them *Star Trek* is immuteable and unchanging. We never intended to do that with *Star Wars*. We gave hints of this in the grimness of *Empire* as well as in stating that *Revenge Of The Jedi* would be the third film in a trilogy and that the next three thereafter would not feature Luke Skywalker at all. But after seeing what happened with *Star Trek*, we kept a tight lid on the fact that main characters would die in the third film. We didn't want to be pressured by distributors terrified that *Revenge* would bomb. Frankly, it never mattered to me if it bombed. Not really. Life does not begin and end with *Star Wars*. I have many other projects in the works, and the success of *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* has proven that *Star Wars* wasn't just a fluke idea of mine.

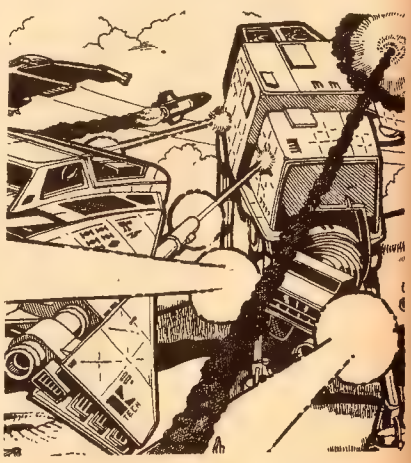
"The bottom line is that *Star Wars* isn't just another version of *Star Trek*, and it was never intended to be. It's the fans who attached that label to it. Characters don't die in *Star Trek* so conversely they look upon *Star Wars* as having the same unrealistic restrictions. I wanted *Star Wars* to be much more than that. I always said that the first film was only 25% of what I wanted it to be and with the freedom I achieved I was able to make the subsequent films much closer to my ideal. In real life, people die and things change. This is not to say that *Star Wars* is necessarily real life, but neither should it be absolutely and totally divorced from it. The first film was aimed at 14 year olds. The second film at 17 year olds, and now the 14 year olds who saw *Star Wars* in 1977 are 20 year olds and they want something more than Flash Gordon and, no disrespect intended, but something more than *Star Trek* as well. *The*



Revenge Of The Jedi ends on a note of triumph and that triumph exists because adversity existed as well. A price is paid, but then there always is in success."

Lucas's point about *Star Trek* is well taken, but then George Lucas has far more control over *Star Wars* than Gene Roddenberry has over *Star Trek*.

There were those who originally criticized *Star Wars* as being a waste because it wasn't serious science fiction. With the third film those criticisms are just distant echoes in light of the bold approaches taken in *Revenge*. But one question still remains. Now Luke has Leia, but who does Chewie have? ★



STARDOG EXCLUSIVE

DICK CAVETT INTERVIEWS

BERT I. GORDON

"Although I find Mr. Gordon's films to be personally obnoxious, and that his status as a film-maker falls somewhere below that of Jerry Lewis (and if I've offended any Frenchmen with that remark, it's only because you deserve it), I found myself wrapped up in this interview assignment for *Stardog*. With the cut in the National Endowment to the Arts chopping my schedule of new shows in half, I find myself with a little unwanted free time these days, and what better way to fill it but doing an unwanted interview? Although I'd never even considered having Mr. Gordon on my show on PBS (I'd sooner mud wrestle with all three of the Gabor sisters), I found myself cajoled into doing this. Perhaps cajoled isn't the correct word. it had more to do the *Stardog's* threat to reveal which NFL linebackers propositioned me during a commercial break on my show, once - or was it twice? *Anyway*, here I am and here this is and I'm sure that you're looking forward to this just as much as I am. Sometimes I wish I'd never left Nebraska."

STARDOG: I suppose I should start off by asking you which of your films are the worst, but that's sort of like asking which tooth on the buzz saw hits the board first.

GORDON: I find your elitism peculiar in light of the fact that in a PBS auction once I saw you peel the shirt off your back and sell it on the air. How many cities did you pull that stunt in?

STARDOG: Where ever I could get away with it. Speaking of bare plots, I hear that you're planning a remakr of one of your old films?

GORDON: That's right. I'm remaking *King Dinosaur*. I think the lizards I passed off as special effects in that one are still alive, which is more than I can say for the careers of the actors who appeared in it.

STARDOG: It's been said that you keep remaking *Food Of The Gods* in hopes of one day getting it right. Is that true?

GORDON: Hey, it's in public domain. I steal what I can and as long as they give me money to crank out treacle like that, who am I to complain?

STARDOG: You sound a lot like Roger Corman.

GORDON: Thank you.

STARDOG: Not many people would take that as a compliment.

GORDON: Well, Roger and I are a lot alike in many ways.

STARDOG: obviously.

GORDON: To take a for instance. We both consider ourselves to be compromised geniuses. I guess I've been compromised insince I was ten years old and my films clearly demonstrate that arrested development. Look at *Attack Of the Fifty Foot Women*. Who else would make a film in which the leading lady's bazooms are the size of the Hindenburg?

STARDOG: What an apt comparison. A lot of your films have involved teenagers, such as *Village Of The Giants, The Magic Sword, The Boy and The Pirates*, and in *The Spider*, the creature of the title was awakened from suspended animation due to a group of teenagers having a sock hop and the strains of Rock and Roll music brought it around.

GORDON: I believe whenever possible in including social commentary on the compelling issues of the day. Rock and Roll was very controversial back then, especially to out-of-it filmmakers who saw it as somthing cheap to exploit. We considered our audience to be mindless teenagers and so we peopled our films with mindless teenagers.

STARDOG: No wonder your films were so mindless. While we're on the subject, I can't help but recall the scene in *Food Of The Gods* when Pamela Franklin and Marjoe Gortner are trapped in teh house by giant rats and the situation apparently turned her on because she suddenly turned to him and said, "Let's make love?"

GORDON: have you ever tried doing it to the sound of giant rats?

STARDOG: Not recently.

GORDON: Well, different strokes for different folks. .

STARDOG: How do you feel about the fact that despite a career of some three decades of filmmaking, that you're not mentioned at all in *The Science Fictionary* by Ed Naha, Peter nicholls's *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* and *The Visual Encyclopedia Of Science Fiction?*

GORDON: I expect to become a cult phenomenon any day now. My films tne to mature with age. They grow on people, like a fungus.

STARDOG: What regrets do you have as a filmmaker?

GORDON: That I wasn't able to get Harlan Ellison to script *Food Of The Gods* for me. He started quoting stuff at me like the inverse-square law or somesuch thing which has no bearing on filmmaking whatsoever. I mean, you'd think he thought all this was serious or something. Then he got all bent out of shape just because he found out I was cribbing ideas from old science fiction pulps, as if it made a difference. I mean, we steal stuff in Hollywood every day. We've got to, otherwise everyone would find out we haven't had a new thought since September of 1956 and that we've been coasting ever since. Can you imagine what would happen if that was discovered? You know what would break out in Hollywood?

STARDOG: Talent? New faces?

GORDON: Of course! It would be a catastrophe! Thousands of people would be thrown out of work. It would be the end of the gravy train. I'd have to work for a living!

STARDOG: What is your career goal?

GORDON: Well, I've been a third rate Irwin Allen all my life. I'd like to move up the ladder a bit and at least become a second rate Irwin Allen.

STARDOG: And I think you can do it if anyone can. ★

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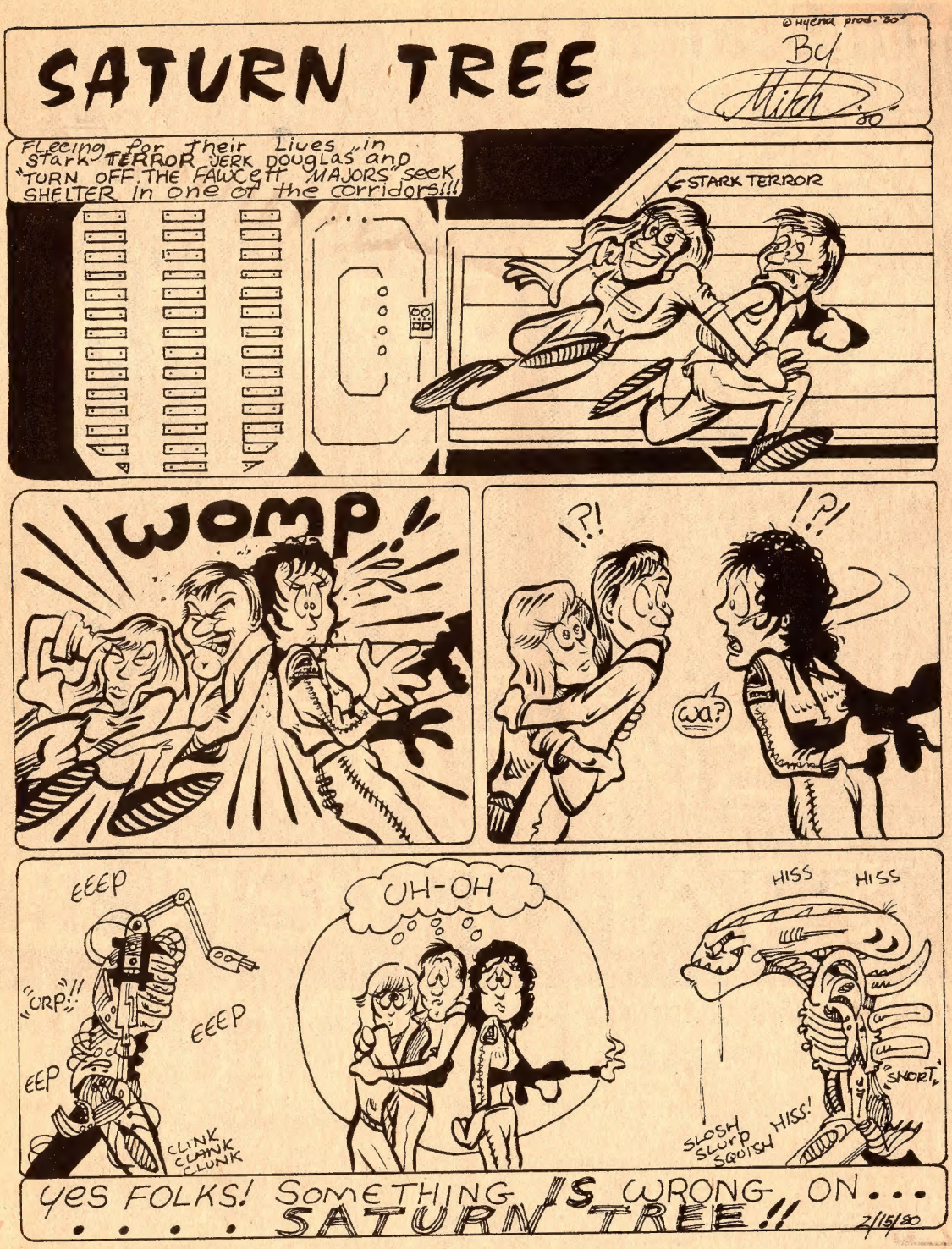
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WOMP!
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EEEP
EEP
CLINK CLANK CLUNK
OH-OH
HISS HISS
"SNORT"
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HISS!
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YAAE!
SPAZZ
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EH?
?
JJJ
TAKE A BITE OF THIS PINEAPPLE!
NHUG!
GAH
HENH, HENH!
BLAM
WELL, I GUESS WE SHOWED THEM, EH, FELLAS?
HEH HEH WE SURE DID! WE MIGHT EVEN GET MEDALS FOR THIS!
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